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The SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

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E CRUCI[illegible]XIO[illegible] NE GILBERT," by Richmond B. Ba

Complete Short Novel

FOURTEEN [illegible]LENT SHORT STORIES

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Vol. LIII SEPTEMBER, 1917 No. 1

The SMART SET

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BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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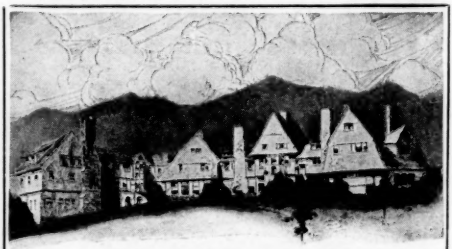

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Vol. LIII SEPTEMBER, 1917 No. 1

The SMART SET

America's One Continental Magazine

THE BOOK OF FOOLS

By John McClure

I

THERE was a man in Babylon said he would live forever because of a black elixir he had drawn from the aloe tree . . .

He is dead.

II

THERE was an emperor in China said to his mistress, an olive-dyed lady of Peking, "I shall love you till the great wall crumble and be washed away by rains, till the stars turn grey with age, and the mountains that girdle the kingdom march like giants into the sea." And he believed it.

Ere the moon was new again, he was dancing the can-can in the imperial palace at Peking with a lissome flower-girl who had come with a basket of blossoms from the village of Chiang-Nan.

III

THERE was a philosopher in Thebes said he would unravel the world. He said he would explain birth, life, death, time and inexplicable space.

Now he is in the seventh circle of hell, laughing forever.

IV

THERE was a man in Jericho believed all women were virtuous.

His wife bore him children that resembled a merchant who came every year to Jericho with a caravan from the west.

V

THERE was a man in Gomorrha believed no woman was virtuous. He acted accordingly . . .

And lost the love of a lady more beautiful than the stars.

VI

THERE was a king in India said he would conquer the world. He had conquered Thibet, Siam, the principalities of China, and was in a fair way to upset Turkey and all Greece.

Three leagues from Bagdad he swallowed a fish-bone and died in a fit.

VII

THERE was a man in Teheran, when the world was young, longed to write poems that all men should remember. He studied in books of metric

and lived severely and dreamed of his epic in which the gods, doing battle, wheeled like comets across the skies. He wrote it neatly on parchment in flowing and intricate script. He is forgotten . . .

And men treasure like silver and gold the silly verses that his neighbour, one Omar, scribbled upon his shirt-tail when he was hopelessly drunk.

VIII

THERE was a king in Libya builded a pyramid of the skulls of his enemies, twenty cubits high, so men should remember him and be afraid.

The rains crumbled the skulls into sand and the peasants of Libya sowed seed in it and grew carrots and cabbages and became fat, and feared nobody.

IX

THERE was a man in Delhi was so wise that men came three thousand leagues to learn of him, because he could read the stars.

He fell in love with his neighbor's wife and battered his brains out against his telescope.

X

THERE was a man in Nineveh said the world would weep for him when he was dead.

They carried his corpse to the grave in a cart and the sole mourner behind it was a homeless dog, baying the vacant streets.

XI

THERE was a man in Tyre said he would save men's souls. He preached terribly upon the streets, reforming the world.

The night that he was executed for treason half Tyre was drunk and man's eternal laughter mounted to the stars.

VARIATIONS ON AN OLD THEME

By Benjamin De Casseres

HE (*tentatively*): Yes?
SHE (*archly*): No.
HE (*fawningly*): Yes-s-s-s?
SHE (*recedingly*): No-o-o-o?
HE (*caressingly*): Yesss?
SHE (*coquettishly*): Noooo?
HE (*imperiously*): Yes!!!
SHE (*menacingly*): No!!!
HE (*imploringly*): Yyyes?
SHE (*subtly*): Nnnno.
HE (*cringingly*): Yes?
SHE (*triumphantly*): No!
HE (*finally*): Yes?
SHE (*wearily*): No.
HE-SHE (*smilingly*): Ynoes.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF ANNE GILBERT

By Richmond B. Barrett

CHAPTER I

"WHO is that with those disgusting people—the man you spoke to?" The woman turned and stared frankly at a slim, dark man in a superb motor.

"He is quite lost between the fat of Mamma Benjamin and the furbelows of daughter Benjamin," she continued.

"Oh, that!" exclaimed the man beside her. "That is Tom Landsberg. He once got me out of a scrape—really not a bad kind of Jew."

Since the other automobile was now lost behind a shelf of rock which jutted out into the road, the woman turned again with a little shrug to the wheel of her own motor.

"I simply ignore the Jews—like all self-respecting matrons," she remarked, smiling wisely and tenderly into the man's brilliant eyes. "They are quite fatal to one's social position and peace of mind."

"Anne dear, your reasoning is a bit bewildering, but your voice is enough to convince me. Seriously, though, I wish you would let me bring him to your house. He is right brilliant, and all that sort of thing. Music, art—everything that's æsthetic is in his line. He's not like me—" and the man's handsome, heavy face lit up with a boyish smile.

"He can't be your type at all." She drooped her head to one side and looked at him with narrowed eyes. "And a Jew, too," she murmured. "What a deep hole he must have hauled you out of! You are too silly, Teddy; surely a Christian could have done as well. Still, you may bring him with you if you wish. I humor you absurdly."

He leaned deliberately toward her and kissed her.

Flushing, she turned away.

"Do be careful," she warned. "All Newport might have swept around that corner—to say nothing of *Gossip* reporters possibly crouching behind that clump of bushes."

The man roared his appreciation.

"Oh! You laugh at everything." She shrugged scornfully. "Please have a little consideration."

"Anne," he objected with consciously worried eyes and a smile on his full lips, "you yourself brought us to this; you created the comic spirit. I used to be dead serious about it all—but you laugh and sneer at everything."

"It's not true. You are rude unless I amuse you." She was suddenly angry.

"And you are unreasonable." He took her chin in his hand and turned her face to his.

"This is dangerous," he announced, "for every time you pout and flounce the motor pouts and flounces. But I sha'n't let you go until you smile."

She drew her head back and struggled. He held her firmly.

Young, gay, brutal, he laughed at her efforts and easily conquered. Smiling radiantly into his eyes, she was set free.

"Teddy! You are too adorable to be at large among women," she whispered.

She let him kiss her several times and trembled a little.

Then, pushing him away, "Look at the moon and be quiet," she murmured.

Silent, they drove into the deepening twilight.

"Even in a motor, I can believe in fairies on a night like this," she said at last.

She gazed through the checkered tracery of sturdy branches and delicate leaves overhead, up to the pure, bare sky with its wan moon; she drew in deeply the pungent smell of seaweed.

The man's musings evidently spurred him to more aggressive efforts. He attempted another kiss. With a frown, she turned her mouth away.

"When must we start back to get dressed for Rhoda's?" she remarked prosaically.

"Not before ten-thirty," he answered. "It's seven now," and he surveyed her mischievously. "And 'The Oaks' is only two miles away."

She smiled and sank again into her midsummer dreams; but she seemed nervous; fearful that he might destroy her thin haze of fairy-tale atmosphere. Certainly the man was big enough to loom through any mist and scatter the shreds of gossamer. To her, these adventures in the early evening always seemed delicately scandalous, full of pretty conceits.

Still, she realized vaguely and with anxiety that the man was treating them now with much less reverence than formerly. He was beginning to introduce into them something of the rough-and-tumble young animalism from which he never was quite free, something of the healthy sportiveness of sex that both charmed and frightened her. She had wanted these evenings always to be tremulous, pallidly decadent, charmingly erotic, with all the hopeless pain of sex and none of its exuberant vigor. She often felt now that her dream-plans were scattered. But the part of her that was not fed by French novels exulted in her earthly lover's embrace.

The motor hummed at last up a long, rutty drive. The weeds sprawling over the rough dirt showed plainly in the white moonlight that filtered through the great over-arching oaks and drenched with its pale radiance a rambling old house at the end of the vista of trees.

Leaving the motor in the shelter of the trees, they strolled up to the house, which was without a light in any of its windows, and had the lidless stare of a deserted homestead. As she waited for him to unlock the great door, the absurdity of the affair struck her. With her morbid sentimentality, she had once imagined that all that happened at "The Oaks" would have the solemnity of a rite.

"'The Oaks,'" he declaimed theatrically as he flung open the door.

Then he took her in his arms.

CHAPTER II

ANNE GILBERT, at seventeen, had apparently been the conventional débutante; but behind her delicacy and prettiness there had been an altogether unpleasant worldly wisdom. Certainly, for the child she was, her knowledge of certain aspects of humanity was surprisingly large; but of the wholesomeness and health of humanity she had kept herself in ignorance.

Like all embryo decadents, she strove to destroy her sense of humor. She was morbidly, illogically romantic, to her intense dismay. She even wept sometimes over the vanished elegance of Chopin waltzes. Well versed in the lore of the more unhealthy French novels, she had at her début stepped into the world of society with the feeling that her remaining innocence would inevitably be forfeit before the end of her first season. She was not disappointed. Her good sense awoke almost too late.

Her own misery and the horrified dismay of her parents threw her out of her *fin de siècle mood*. All the vitality of her youth and health reacted against the sick staleness of her first affair. The moping and despair, the weepings at her pale face in her mirror, were soon over. Urged on by her feverishly anxious mother, she

gracefully swept into the marriage market.

"Anne, youngest and loveliest of the Amazons!" her father would mock, while her mother scowled guiltily. One advantage she had gained from her books: she had been wisely discreet and careful in her first sinning. She could meet her partner in the secret at dances, could even be his partner in tennis—and nobody grimaced knowingly. She didn't dislike the man; for she felt he was not to blame. He never betrayed her to others; it wasn't his first offense, therefore he didn't boast.

With her new buoyancy and a sense of humor bravely in bud, she was too charming to remain a maid.

Withal, there remained to her with men a sleepy languor and innocent intensity of passion that never failed of its effect. "A fine mistress for a king," remarked one man, who read her aright and saw the shallowness that was hid from others. It was fatally hid from Travers King, who saw in her only a pure soul in an exquisite physique fit to breed him a strapping offspring. Travers King's intent was marriage; Anne demurred for awhile, then consented. Clever she was, but without foresight. She never should have mated with him. It meant inevitable ruin.

This husband of hers was rather dull in his uprightness, rather austere than lovable, and with a respect for good women that was almost alarming. He was so perfect a son to his harsh old mother that he bored other women. Anne scorned him and admired him. Like all romantic girls, she felt that men of thirty should have complex, lurid pasts. What was Travers' but a dun stretch of respectability? She mocked silently, but was overpowered by his merely physical magnificence, and flattered by his unbending pride in his aristocratic name. He was unquestionably handsome, a King and rich; on the day of the wedding she had felt herself safely in love.

For a year she was content. To be sure, his mother, from her first meeting with Anne, understood her, showed her deep contempt and set the girl shivering.

Travers, too, was a bit stiff for complete happiness; and very soon Anne's innocent lies and mockery of the old order pained him. But his dawning realization of his wife's faults was clouded for a time by the long-heralded arrival of a lusty son.

When Anne was shown her firstborn by its shy father, she shrugged them both away and secretly determined that she was done with motherhood. She was sick of her husband's prudery and stupidity and soon showed it. Discreet as ever before the world, she openly flaunted her flirtations and secret scorn of convention before *his* eyes. Jealousy was never aroused in him, but simply a growing disgust.

For a long time he struggled to believe that her indiscretions were simply the result of a passing weakness; but at last she went too far, forcing him to face the truth squarely.

He saw the terrible blunder he had made; and with a startling decision he turned his back upon her forever. Divorce was out of the question, because of his mother's illogical opposition to anything radical; so, for three years, these two had lived, in the same house, their widely different lives. Anne beheld, at first with regret, the final break; for she had not counted on anything so sudden, so complete. But after a little she grew to consider it fortunate. He left her so gloriously free to do as she pleased.

The staid relatives and friends of her husband always had bored her. For a time she had simply exchanged cards, during the Newport season, with the magnificent new aristocrats.

In New York the circle of her friends was of even smaller dimensions than in the exclusive resort; Travers, perforce lenient in almost everything, had been yet stubborn in choosing her companions for her.

Her Newport seasons, after he had left her to satisfy her caprices at will, were the most triumphant of her life.

Promptly allying herself with the extravagant and pleasure-loving, she soon brought upon herself the fury of the King family; for to the Kings, majestic in the seclusion of their high-walled old mansions, hidden from the streets by slender poplars and massed lilac shrubs, there was a vulgarity beyond description in the superb marble villas and eccentric sunken gardens of the new millionaires.

But Anne was radiant in her new *milieu*. Her gowns became increasingly daring; her bills soared. In her business-like letters to Travers she had need of all her brilliancy of deceit to explain her prodigious expenditures. With a sardonic irony that was quite new to him, her husband now scornfully paid her all the money she wanted and sneered at her subterfuges.

Learning that she was considered witty, she risked everything to create a *bon mot;* unfortunately, however, she was too prone to embroider her pretty conceits.

Of course, the men in her new set flocked about her. Constantly surrounded by a circle of them, she never failed to exult at the roars of mirth that greeted her mockery and sarcasm. Her voice and laugh were no longer carefully modulated. There was in them something unpleasantly metallic and unformed.

"My dear!" once exclaimed her implacable mother-in-law, "she has the voice of a dissipated baby."

The strain of romance in her again asserted itself strongly at this time. In the midst of the brilliant show in which she moved she was constantly weaving little dream-webs of fairy knights and magic casements. She fell madly in love with a slim, blond nonentity who played slashing tennis one year in the National Tournament. Her heart was subsequently enthralled by a young giant with a bull neck and a beard that resisted all onslaughts of the razor.

Then, one night at a big dance, her eyes had met those of young Teddy Winters; and she had clutched at her heart and felt that her doom was sealed. Tall and agile and vivid, with blue eyes that blazed at her and straight black brows that set her quivering, he had taken possession of her at once, with an easy mastery that shamed her.

To do her justice, she really loved for the first time in her life, and for the first time was truly miserable. For two years they yearned to each other, now furiously jealous, now tender, now vindictive, but never content. It was at this time that she rented, from her mother, "The Oaks," the deserted Gilbert homestead, and made of it a romantic rendezvous for herself and her lover.

Teddy had been the first to regain his balance; and gradually, but inevitably, the affair had sunk for him to the level of a conventional *liaison.*

Anne had struggled and mocked, but at last acknowledged him her master and herself hopelessly in love. She had forgotten to be discreet or careful; and he had grown thoughtless. Alone she was always unhappy. He never failed to leave her with desperate fears for the future.

CHAPTER III

On her veranda Anne reclined listlessly in a deep wicker chair. She seemed weary, except for her narrow, fevered eyes. Gusts of salt breeze were racing up from the sapphire-and-gold water. At times she shivered.

Almost an hour had passed since she had miserably dropped into her chair, to thresh out her tangled problems.

Again and again, as she had mercilessly shrugged away each successive plan for the future, her eyes had swept, for relief, the vivid expanse of lawn before her, and the loose-piled rocks beyond, tumbling into the shimmering water, and had rested at last upon a single sail far away that pricked up into the sky.

With almost fierce relief she straightened up as she heard a motor speeding up the drive. In an instant

a girl skipped through the French window at her back.

"Sister Anne," she cried, as she kissed her.

"Laura, darling," murmured Anne.

At once both women became gay and gossipy. The girl's rich laugh brought out sharply the hard ring in her older sister's.

As Anne examined her shrewdly the perfect poise and pride of the girl fretted and almost hurt her. For Laura life would have no problems to be worked out alone.

"By the way, Anne," she remarked as she got up from a basket-couch and perched herself on the creaking arm of her sister's chair, "have you seen Mamma King lately?"

"No. I'm sure that pains her terribly."

Laura examined deeply her own pretty ankles as she continued: "Well, I think the old ogre is terribly feeble. At Rhoda's dance last night—did you notice?—she seemed hardly able to stand up under her ridiculous old tiara. But *did* you see Irene Hewitt?"

"I didn't go to Rhoda's dance. Tell me about Mamma King." Anne was obviously anxious, with one finger at her lip.

"That's all; but everybody noticed it. She tottered off a few minutes after she arrived. You shouldn't have stayed away from Rhoda's, you know," and the girl wrinkled her pretty forehead disapprovingly. "At least once in a season you should be decent to Travers's sister. The people you run about with—your Elsie Ames or Blanche Wilmerding—would have been on hand, if they'd been asked. Rhoda's done with *you,* dear, I'm sure."

"I hope so. She's just like her mother," Anne snapped. "She simply exists to sneer at others and insult me."

"She has been perfectly sweet and thoughtful, you wretch," laughed Laura. "You're in an unspeakable mood and vent your spite on the first person you think of. Doesn't Rhoda detest Teddy Winters, and doesn't she disapprove of him in every way? Of course she does; but she invited him simply because you like him."

Anne grimaced and chuckled. "Irony! Teddy wasn't there, either."

Her sister slid from the arm of Anne's chair and stood facing her.

"My dear," she remarked coolly, "you are acting in a disgraceful, vulgar way."

Anne sat up perfectly straight with fury in her wide eyes.

"Really—" she began with a quiet scorn in her voice, but with trembling lips.

"You might at least act discreetly," continued the other calmly. "You have made a dreadful fool of yourself. If it weren't for Mamma King's position, you would be dropped absolutely. Have you read about yourself—?"

Anne's defiance and terror set her shaking. Feeling herself too weak and sick for a scene with the imperturbable Laura, she rose stiffly from her chair, determined to sweep majestically into the house. As she half turned her back on the girl she saw, coming up the lawn from the Cliff Walk, two men in white flannels. With a twisted smile, she faced Laura again.

"Don't shout so, please." She put her hands to her rebel curls. "I must look a perfect horror," she cried. "Jolly them while I make myself possible."

Half way across the drawing-room she turned and whispered loudly to the astonished Laura:

"He's a Jew, dear—but of the best type."

Then she disappeared.

Her sister spun around to face the water and saw the two men.

Teddy, of course, was one of them. He waved his hat and began shouting gallantries while still fifty feet away.

She tossed back sarcastic answers, settling herself comfortably the while on the verandah railing.

"Mr. Landsberg," he announced carelessly to her, while his companion bowed over her hand.

Mr. Landsberg was being amiably snubbed when Anne reappeared. Paus-

ing in the long window, she curiously watched the scene for an instant. Teddy was roaring at a remark of Laura's, a bit of intimate gossip that left the young Jew quite at a loss. Leaning against the railing and bending forward deferentially, he looked very handsome. Sleek and tall, with fine features, his eyes alone confessed him of "the chosen." They were large and slightly bulging, shrewd and yet sleepy, the hazel iris small. His head always was bent slightly forward, so that a line of white showed between the iris and the lower lid.

"Too much ado," the reader will sneer, "about a pair of eyes!" But they show his character too perfectly to be slighted.

During the first moments after the introduction, Anne was too busy acting the hostess over the tea-table to notice more than his voice, beautifully modulated, but distinct, almost aggressive, not what she had expected from his eyes. After the footman had retired into the background, after Teddy's jest about preferring "bubbly water to lemon in *his* tea" had been properly dismissed, she turned her attention to Landsberg, leaving Laura and Teddy to mock each other good-naturedly. She wasn't jealous of her sensible sister. Besides, Teddy would be pleased at her kindness to Landsberg.

He was sitting beside her, perfectly at ease, watching with vague approval her dainty way with her cigarette.

"You are an artist," he said. " 'What joy to watch you!' You should sing *Suzanne.*"

She hummed a measure to show him she understood. "Cigarettes aren't the bliss they used to be, since all the world approves. Isn't it sad to think that there can be no more *Suzannes?*"

There was a slight pause.

Then, with an abruptness that annoyed her, he asked:

"May I visit you next winter in your box?—in the *entr'actes?*"

His eyes rested on her with an almost servile humility; but his voice was assertive. There was in it the uneasy arrogance of the climber.

She was guardedly distant and stiff in her reply. "Unfortunately, I can claim a box as my own only on odd Mondays."

He continued in the same strain,

"That will be charming for me; for then you must come often to my box. I have one for the entire season—young Turnbull's. He is to be abroad. The opening night, now—"

She interrupted deliberately,

"Thank you, my husband's mother claims me for the opening."

"But I sha'n't give you up," he went on with exasperating calm. "It is my ambition to have you for an opening night. I shall bide my time."

She was beginning to dislike the man intensely.

She pointedly introduced another topic. "Mr. Winters tells me you have a brilliant collection of paintings by the Spanish masters. It must require shameless doggedness to run down a Goya."

He took the thrust unabashed. "Precisely. I find it takes shameless doggedness to succeed at anything; and I have several magnificent Goyas. I never relax in any pursuit; I follow the scent unerringly. I seldom fail."

"You have unbounded confidence in yourself."

"One must have to-day."

"You aren't like other men, Mr. Landsberg," she remarked. "You evidently value women only as an audience. You are always the protagonist."

"You misunderstand." He hastened to justify himself. "I was autobiographical in conversation merely to protect women from doing the same. I prefer to dream about the lives of the women I admire. There must be mystery or there can't be worship."

The Oriental in him had suddenly gained the upper hand once more. She felt herself respond to his new mood. The annoyance caused by his arrogance and his "moral rubbing of the hands oilily," as she ludicrously put it to herself, soon passed.

He became animated, fascinating. Their talk touched on music, art, and lingered over the peculiar glory of jewels.

He seemed to discover, before she had betrayed herself, that her knowledge of music and art was purely that of the conventional smart woman, and had veered skilfully to the topic of jewels at the right moment. On the subject of jewels Anne's judgment was keen, her knowledge unusually full and her artistic appreciation exquisite.

Teddy and Laura, who were quite incapable of enjoying any situation for long, had some time since strolled down the lawn and scrambled out of sight over the shelf of rock. They at last came scampering back, panting and talking fast, like two children.

Laura at once suggested that she drive the men home in her little motor.

"Plenty of room—Mr. Landsberg may recline on the running-board."

"Splendid!" He asserted with alacrity.

After he had bent with elaborate humility over Anne's hand, he suavely announced:

"You must all come and have dinner with me some night—at Berger's, or at the Narragansett Casino. We could make a day of it in my boat."

Laura grimaced at Teddy. Anne frowned, furious.

Laura dismissed the invitation carelessly. "Sorry. Impossible."

Anne gave it its death blow by keeping silent. Landsberg remained perfectly composed and unashamed.

"I sha'n't forget about the Opera," he tossed back casually as he followed the other two through the French window.

CHAPTER IV

"WHY did you bring Landsberg along with you? He is simply odious."

Conspicuously brilliant with her bizarre parasol and big hat, Anne sat staidly in the sand and glanced down on Teddy. In the scantiest of bathing-suits, he lay on his back and peered sleepily at her. He was naïvely unconscious of his inelegantly brown legs. Blinking at the sky, and running the sand through his fingers, he had been murmuring to her absurdly sentimental things. She knew they were silly; but with her eyes on the sprawling length of him, she—

It was early and they had Bailey's Beach to themselves. Teddy occasionally matched her romantic excursions in the moonlight with equally preposterous schemes. She always fell in with his suggestions; so here they were at six in the morning, he nestling into the sand, half basking in the new heat, half snuggling from the morning chill; she with her parasol up, from custom.

He took up her question and pondered it.

Then, with a slow smile:

"And why did you break in on my tenderness just now?"

He heaved himself up, lounged into a comfortable position on his stomach and took both her hands.

"You are of a shamelessness! There's French in you—you can be so ingenuously wicked." She smiled down on him.

"I shall kiss you before I take my swim," he whispered.

"Sybarite!" she mocked. "You wouldn't move now for the world—sleek, lazy boy."

She knew him.

In an instant he had started up and kissed her.

"Now go, take your swim." She was flushed.

"No, now I'll answer your question. He was tremendously struck; he'd watched you from a distance for years—at the Opera, at private exhibitions, at first nights on Broadway. He was forever after me about you; and I owed him something, you know."

"And you owe me nothing?—no consideration?"

"But Anne darling, you distinctly told me—"

"Yes, I know; but you must have felt I didn't want him. You are growing

terribly selfish, *mon beau cavalier sans merci.*"

He demurred, evasively. "I don't think him a bad sort at all."

"He is odious and vulgar. I am sure he could bully one into submission."

"Oh! You're all wrong. He is too humble—he is a Jew only in that."

"And you are too superficial to judge properly. The man is a paradox. He is a servile bully—a slave and a slave-driver."

"Nonsense! But you should have heard him yesterday, on the subject of yourself."

"There you are! I can show you what the man is like."

"Well?"

"You spent all day yesterday with him. And you didn't want to, did you?"

"I wasn't particularly keen about it," he drawled. "How could I, with you in Newport? An entire day without you—"

She was triumphant. "He simply drove you into it; and when he conquered, he became so slavish that you never realized it." She shivered in mock horror. "He is uncanny."

"I took him through 'The Oaks'," he remarked after a pause, during which he had contemplated her intensely. "He heartily approved of your plan—the saving of your family homestead from ruin." He chuckled. "And the cabbage patch and kitchen garden back of the house—he thought them a shrewd move on your part. That tickled his business sense. He said he supposed the gardener and his family lived in the house."

He was shaking with laughter.

Anne's face was serious, almost angry.

He went on unconcernedly. "Not a soul has ever suspected. But seriously, Anne"—with a mirthful roar—"doesn't it sometimes strike you as foolish? Here you have put out a lot of money, and still we have to sneak about, and drive for miles to get to the place and make people furious by being late for their dances afterwards—and when we do get inside 'The Oaks' safely, we may have romance and mystery, but we don't have real comfort."

Slowly he had become conscious that Anne's silence was ominous.

He now surveyed her merrily, and was at last struck by the pained lines in her white face. She was struggling with rage and tears. He had seen her so before, and knew that the sensible thing was to leave her to torture herself into good sense alone.

He became serious and matter-of-fact.

"I shan't be long. Just to the float and back," and he sprang up and sped down the beach and into the water.

It wasn't the first time that his brutality had left her sick, and impotently raging. In pity for herself, she sobbed hopelessly and weakly for a time, then with the tears brushed away for an instant the romantic mist. It was always so; only after her fits of wrath did she view her situation clearly.

She saw in a glance the pitiful fool she had made of herself and resolved forthwith to win back her self-respect. And as she determined romantically to give up her lover and by submissive gentleness to gain once more her husband's love, she recognized with a desperate toss of her head that the mist had closed in again. She could have smiled at her mawkish mental picture of reconciliation with Travers. And to give Teddy up?

She gazed out at the dazzling water, that made of the land a crescent, with the yellow sand of the beach as a center and the bright green and rich brown of the jutting headlands for its uneven horns. On the float far out, a figure poised superbly, then swept out of sight and up again and with the grace and precision of a sea-gull. Her eyes grew tender as she watched.

She shook herself angrily out of her sentimental brooding. She must not sit humbly here and smile into his eyes as he strode back to her like a master. He had blundered vulgarly; he must seek her out and ask to be forgiven.

Unwillingly, she got up, shook the

sand from her dress and walked through the old pavilion to her motor. She acknowledged silently as she left the beach that she wished she had no shred of pride left, that she might have stayed and smoothed back the wet hair plastered about his radiant eyes and kissed him. I doubt if the man knew how absolute a slave she was to him.

For three days Anne sulked and fretted and wept hopelessly. On the fourth she sent for him. Shrewdly, he kept her waiting; so that when he appeared, he had her in just the state he desired. For a week, she forgot even to be petulant in her desperate new possession of him.

On one matter, however, she was obdurate. She had determined never again to visit "The Oaks" with him. Like all women of her type, she sacrificed to him recklessly everything that really counted, holding back sullenly and fiercely only in petty matters.

With a sharpness of perception that no mist could dim, Anne had for some time understood what she was losing for this man.

She saw how the people of real importance, her husband's relatives, scorned her; she realized that her gloriously selfish set could be cruel. And yet at times she took a savage pleasure in the prospect of pulling everything about her ears, even of giving up the man she loved by keeping to a tiny resolve.

A strange mixture of fatal shallowness and hopeless passion kept her instead at work repairing feverishly her crumbling house of pride.

They never again visited "The Oaks" together; but with characteristic clumsiness, Teddy, time and again, joked about it brutally, teasing her into a violent rage. Then she would stab out at him blindly, bitterly, and he would grin amiably and taunt her with perfect good nature.

From the day of the quarrel on the beach, their relation to each other changed. By sending for him, Anne had confessed herself beaten; and he had made use of his new advantage to the full. When her pitifully warped pride returned in a rush, his perfect mastery of her flaunted itself the more. Their position became unbearable, except for moments when his old tender, boyish affection would assert itself.

She fell to unhealthy brooding, which always began in dumb resentment at his untimely jests, and ended far afield. She attributed to him depths of scheming and trickery to pain her that the poor fellow never dreamed of. With a love for him much deeper than he was capable of feeling, she, in the end, made their life intolerable, and forced him to perceive that happiness for himself could come only with separation from her.

At last, in mid-September, after a final stormy scene, in which he had shown all that was most ugly in him, Anne fled to the Adirondacks for a fortnight, to strive alone to harden her heart against him forever.

Miserable, lonely, she succeeded only in sobbing away her last poor rag of pride. So she returned to Newport. She despised herself, pitied herself intensely, felt herself sadly weak. Even the dismal aspect of Bellevue Avenue, with its rows of houses boarded for the winter, brought tears to her eyes.

At home, she immediately called Laura. The thought that Teddy might be no longer in Newport frightened her; but she knew that Saturday brought him back, until late in the autumn, to one of several houses.

The firm, musical voice of her sister irritated her; she knew the weary rasp of her own. "Dear Anne, it's so absurdly late to come back. Why didn't you close the house when you left before?"

Anne ignored the question. "I am so bored here. Isn't there a week-end party somewhere I could peep in on uninvited?"

"But yes! Mother has half a dozen or so people here—the Nealy Gilberts, the Douglas Kings, the Tony Warrens —and Ted Winters."

"An over-abundance of family con-

nections; but I shall intrude just the same."

Laura was sympathetic. "You sound perfectly dead. Never mind tonight; better go right to bed."

For the first time, Anne felt a dread at the prospect of meeting Teddy. All her longing ebbed away to a sick fear.

With a sigh of relief, she fell in with Laura's suggestion. "Yes!" Dinner and bed for tonight."

"Then tomorrow morning, Teddy and I will run over for you and bring you around to luncheon."

Over her solitary dinner, Anne was struck as she remembered the tone in which Laura had spoken of "Ted Winters." Was there exultation in it? Nonsense! She shrugged the suspicion away sufficiently to be angered at the nervous noises the butler and footman were making in their attempts to be perfectly still.

In bed, she tossed nervously for a time, until her intense thoughtfulness became dulled by drowsiness and resolved itself into the happy consciousness that she would see him in the morning. Then she slept.

* * * *

Anne stepped nervously through the entrance door to the terrace.

"How good it is to see something alive, without shrouds or patches," she exclaimed gaily to the bright young pair in Laura's motor.

The feeling of sick dread returned as she gave him her hand. With narrowed eyes she watched him keenly; the tumult of her heart left her faint.

With her knowledge of him, she saw enough to terrify her; the dark flush; the eyes that met hers fully for an instant, then shifted quickly to the ground; his patent confusion. His dumb, beseeching glance at Laura left her with but one thought, which throbbed monotonously through her confused consciousness:

"I have lost him! I have lost him."

Laura was speaking; Anne forced herself to listen. "We have just come from the beach. The water was of an iciness!—but it made one's blood *race*."

Anne was conventionally incredulous. "Swimming?—in mid-October?" She turned bravely to him and smiled coolly.

"It was superb," he answered in measured tones, his eyes on Laura.

He was still red, with the knowledge that he was playing the fool.

They were beside the motor, still guardedly discussing the effects of bathing in mid-October.

"Get in, Anne," ordered the competent Laura, who had already plunged into her seat.

"Most unreverend boss," answered Anne, sinking gracefully into her place.

On the running-board, beside Laura, he perched himself silently.

During the short ride, Anne warily watched him; and she knew that he had not carelessly thrown her aside. She understood as she examined his worried, boyish face, that she had left him with a terrible problem, that he had taken his determination unwillingly but firmly. She was altogether to blame; with her frantic unreasonableness, she had left him but one sensible course. Behind the passion there had once been an illogical respect for her in him that had made his eyes shine, that had made him toss his head in proud challenge to the world.

She hated herself as she sat there, recalling tragically that the gradual change in his attitude had struck her from the moment she had first shown herself weak and cowardly before the world. His brave stupidity had degenerated with the loss of his ideals; and she had lowered herself to the level of the conventional mistress. She had seen him mischievously, sometimes insolently, tramp with her through her carefully-woven webs of artifice; she had felt his caresses become less tender and more violent. And she had let this go on, and still had spun her romances of the earth.

With all her cleverness, she had let herself become, for him, simply what any woman might be, and then had revolted frantically and spoiled it all.

CHAPTER V

At the luncheon table, Anne's dumb misery changed to a feeling of sullen resentment at the smug self-centered prigs around her. Throughout the meal it seemed to her that every word, every gesture showed restrained disapproval of herself. She knew that if all these people refused absolutely to speak to her, they would be perfectly justified, but she could not repress a sense of hurt pride, of helplessness before bitter injustice.

She sat between bland, good-natured Nealy Gilbert and Tony Warren, "the sea-green, corrupted one," as she always spoke of him to others. She wondered if it was the result of her mother's tact or of the command of the injured ladies that the pallid Rita Gilbert dropped at her husband's right, and that vivacious Marie Warren chattered away at Tony's left.

Mrs. Gilbert seemed painfully brittle and artificial between the dowdy, austere Douglas Kings. Laura, with the instinct of the true hostess, listened brightly and kept the conversation from dropping; she had learned long ago not to trust her doll-like mother, with her fatuous lisp, on such an occasion. Teddy was ill at ease and bored; big noisy parties were his delight.

"I was really astonished," began Mrs. Gilbert, "when I thought today how many were staying on late this season." Years before the good lady had blundered upon this opening for October luncheons.

Mrs. Warren caught up the topic:

"Yes! Even some of our new Queens of Finance. Mrs. Ames and her diamonds are spending a cozy October here."

Rita Gilbert shivered prettily and glanced at Anne. "How *does* she live, in that great vulgar house?"

Anne arched her eyebrows:

"Vulgar house?"

Rita wearily spread her arms wide:

"Yes. It sprawls over space greedily. Anything consciously bigger than the average is vulgar."

Anne grimaced at the huge, proud-chested Nealy:

"Spare your poor, beaming husband, dear. He's only too charmingly concious of his immensity."

Nealy roared his appreciation.

Marie Warren rushed to the rescue of Rita. This scheme of criticizing Anne through her friends was too alluring to relinquish.

With eager mimicry of the queenly Mrs. Ames, she played with the topic. "One can picture her sweeping over acres of chilly marble, with her necklaces clanking as she shivers."

"Why *does* she stay on?" put in Laura.

"To enjoy the ocean in its autumn ugliness," replied Mrs. Douglas King.

Anne had been striving to appear perfectly indifferent. Now she burst out:

"Can't one of us suggest something sufficiently scandalous—so we may drop the subject with comfort?"

"In her case, we might not have to tax our imaginations," snapped Mrs. Warren.

"Perhaps," suggested Tony with a leer, "perhaps she awaits, from her casement, the yacht of—"

"Anne didn't wish to be followed literally in her request," said Nealy and silenced him.

Laura felt it past her power to effect a gradual transition to another subject. She simply broke in on the polite wrangle with:

"Is anybody playing tennis this afternoon? It's not too late to play on dirt courts."

The men jumped at the suggestion. Anne tossed her mocking smile at Marie Warren, whose last brilliant word on the subject of Mrs. Ames had been left unspoken.

With vivacious annoyance, Marie fretted while the conversation remained stupid and innocuous.

With malice in her wise eyes, Anne leaned toward Tony.

"Do you still woo your Muses—?" she asked.

He smiled wanly:

"My Muses?"

She laughed:

"You are notoriously one who doesn't court the seven deadly virtues."

He signalled his understanding:

"Oh! Avarice and wrath I no longer chase. I'm still 'in strong' with the others."

"But I had heard weird rumors of absolute reform—camping trips with the children in Canada—"

He was smiling into her eyes. "That wasn't reform; that was medicine. The man pays, you know. Thank Heaven I'm well again."

Anne grimaced flattering disapproval:

"Then those poor infant sons of yours probably came back from camp smelling of whisky and lisping poker terms."

They laughed. "How much you know of me," he murmured.

He was betraying his interest quite shamelessly, and was quite reckless of the effect on others. Their two voices, sunk to a murmur and sounding almost intense in contrast to the high babble of conversation of the others, made them doubly conspicuous.

Anne had noticed the furtive anxiety of Marie, who was being nervously alert and charming in her remarks on some recent scandalous escapade in the "yellow set," as she called it.

"Anne," Marie broke in, "forgive the interruption, but may I suggest that you rent her 'The Oaks'? The place is useless to *you;* but *she* needs something dark and out-of-the-way."

"More scandal?—about my vulgar friends?" Anne confessed unabashed that she had not been listening.

Marie didn't bother to explain. She had shown Anne how much she knew and was content to aid Laura in her desperate attempt to revive the subject of tennis.

After luncheon, Anne went out to the veranda with Tony, to wait for her automobile.

"Mayn't I drive you home?" he had begged.

"No, thanks!" she had said. "I prefer to have my own motor brought around. I am going for a drive, this chilly day." She nestled into her furs.

His eyes brightened. "Furs alone won't keep you warm."

He bent over her; all his lax weariness had vanished.

She smiled coolly. "That wasn't subtle. My wrap will keep me warm enough, without making stupid remarks at the same time."

When her motor arrived, he obsequiously helped her into it, having brushed the chauffeur carelessly aside. He remained with one foot on the veranda step, and one on the running-board of the automobile. His eyes were beseeching. She shook her head, leaned out and took a key from the chauffeur.

As she steered her way out of the drive, he called after her:

"I'm leaving Newport tonight. I'm coming to see you in town."

"Splendid!" she answered.

He slowly walked back into the drawing-room, with bright plans for the winter already shaping themselves in his brain.

Through the brilliant sunlight, Anne swept recklessly past great sombre houses of stone and marble, with their windows boarded and their thin cypresses and gleaming statues shrouded in sackcloth.

Soon she was out in a dusty road; and on either side was a crop of straight, long grass, stretching to a tangle of trees. The foliage here was of a deep, sullen red, except where a trail of woodbine flamed across her path. A few small houses broke into the mass of burnt-out foliage, and through the clearings they made, she could see the ocean shimmering far away on her right.

When she came to an abrupt stop under the arch of trees at "The Oaks," she sat still for a moment. During the drive a dull rage had driven the blood to her head and set it throbbing. She had been unable to think. Now she put her icy hands to her forehead and shivered a little.

Jerking open the door of the motor, she stepped out, and, slamming the door

viciously, muttered: "The damned fools!"

Then she laughed softly and shrugged at her *gaucherie*.

As she walked sullenly up the path to the house, her blind fury returned. Half-aloud, she muttered most alarming curses. Suddenly she realized that she was almost shouting imprecations. That made her laugh; and her amusement restored her to her normal thought processes. The misery of her situation, the hopelessness of her future, her desperate need of winning back something of the position she had thrown away came to her in a flash and caused her a fit of weeping as she unlocked the heavy door and let herself in.

It was the first time she had been in the house since a warm August night when Teddy had been for once the tender lover of her desire. The hollow thud of the door, as she swung it to, increased her weak horror of the problems facing her and sent through her the physical ache of loneliness and sorrow.

She rushed sobbing up the dark, creaking stairs, through the chilly corridor and into a room of surprising daintiness and charm, with a vista of tiled bath beyond. It was all pink and white in the sunshine, as exquisite as if Fragonard, turned interior decorator, had wrought its charm.

She stood on the threshold weakly while sobs quivered through her, then walked to the bed and sank upon it. Her heavy wrap seemed to drag her down with its weight. Once more she was totally unable to think. So she sat there and cried and wiped her eyes until she was tired.

At last, with a weary shrug, she stood up. She was beginning to feel cold. Wrapping her furs around her, she crouched in a chair by the window and let the sun shine on her.

All at once she heard a footstep in the corridor. She sprang to her feet, her heart wild. Of course, her first thought was of Teddy. Then she remembered that she had forgotten to lock the front door behind her. There came a soft rap at one of the closed doors, then at another, then at the door of the room she was in. She kept perfectly still.

"Mrs. King! Mrs. King!" called a musical voice.

She recognized it at once; it was Landsberg's.

She frowned with annoyance.

The voice continued undaunted:

"Mrs. King! Wherever you are, may I come in?"

In another instant, he was in the room with her.

He bowed humbly, almost cringing.

She dropped her veil over her face and waited for his apology.

"You didn't answer; I thought you might have gone; so I—"

Her voice was unsteady and hoarse. "I came here to be alone."

"Forgive me! I saw you come in; I wrestled with my rudeness. But I *had* to see you." He was obsequious; but in his eyes there was determination.

"Were you—prowling about?" she asked.

She felt that she was being melodramatic, and that he was aware of it.

"I was merely feeling the enchantment of this place," he answered. "I have called persistently at your house; you have not received me. So I spend a great deal of time out here and dream of you. Surely you do not refuse me that?"

She saw at once that a tone of indignation would never suffice in dealing with this man. She would need all her cleverness; so she dropped into easy banter.

"If you must dream of me, why come all this way for atmosphere?"

The humility in him was giving place to the self-assertive artist. He was watching her pretty figure, outlined against the window.

"Oh, but you misunderstand! I don't *have* to dream of you. It is a conscious process, a labored art—except when I am asleep."

"Then you should choose a pursuit

more able to yield you something substantial," she suggested.

"Only the Jews wish always a tangible gain," he answered and looked her straight in the eyes; "I am content to pursue the unattainable—occasionally."

She showed her interest.

"You are not consistent. That contradicts what you told me before."

He smiled.

"But, of *course* I am not consistent. I try not to be."

She smiled back at him. "In one respect you are."

He took her meaning. "I should not talk always of myself. Very well. I warn you, however, I shan't allow you—" he caught himself up—"But we have been over all this before."

"Is 'The Oaks' a sufficiently impersonal topic? Or is there too much of *me* apparent?"

She sat down again in the chair by the window, drew up her veil and frowned at herself in the tiny mirror of her vanity box.

"We men always appreciate dainty, autobiographical touches like that," he said as she earnestly dabbed powder under her reddened eyes.

"Heard vanities are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter?" she asked, after he had lighted her cigarette.

"Precisely—in a woman. In a man quite the opposite holds true."

They were silent while he drew up a chair close to her. When he sat down she noticed the graceful droop forward of his head as he bent slightly towards her. He was undeniably handsome, except for his eyes.

"Tell me what you think of the room," she said as he slowly looked about.

"The room is charming. But how *could* you do it?" There was reproach in his tone.

"Do what—pray?"

He was earnest in his protest,

"Suppose Sherry were to hollow out the head of the Sphinx and splash molten gold about in the cavity and create a flimsy little Supper-Room. What should you think?"

"You terrify me. Is my blunder so enormous?—so crass?"

"One comes into this decidedly noble old mansion, with its heavy doors, and its smell of age and its damp darkness. And suddenly one stumbles upon a frivolous, rococo room, all brightness and sunshine and French sachet."

"But I wanted a little quiet retreat. I didn't want to cultivate thoughts on death and decay."

"You must learn. They are the most fascinating thoughts."

"It is too late this season." She got up and let him arrange her furs for her.

"Shall you let me come to see you sometimes in town?" he asked as he shut and locked the front door for her. "When is your day?"

In a flash he had changed to the beggar and she to the woman jealous of her exclusive position.

"Unfortunately, we are ruthlessly giving up all the fine old conventions, including 'days,'" she replied evasively.

"Then I must take my chance of finding you in?"

"I am afraid so; but don't let me discourage you from attempting."

"Oh, no! I am indefatigable." He helped her into her automobile and shut the door of it quietly. "You have been much kinder than I expected—after the last time." He spoke with soft gratitude; but there was nothing servile now in his humility.

CHAPTER VI

After dinner, Anne felt, in spite of a crushing physical weariness, that her intense activity of mind would keep her awake. In bed, after a hot bath, she tried to read; but the thought of Teddy made her attention wander. She put the book down, lit a cigarette and sank into musing.

Intensely she strove to live over again in memory the first year of their passionate love for each other. She gained by that nothing but flushed cheeks and a throbbing heart. The joy and ecstasy were dead forever. Only anguish came from the remembrance. She buried

her face in the pillow and lay quiet.

When her emotion had spent itself, she suddenly sat up straight, piled the pillows high behind her and switched off the light. The cool breeze beat upon her bare throat; she looked through the pale tracery of leaves outside her window, out to the silvered, whispering ocean. Her thoughts became clear and relentless.

Two things were obvious. Teddy was out of her life; and the Douglases and the Kings were her bitterest enemies—that is, the women of the Douglases and Kings. The men were all like Tony Warren, only too eager to take Teddy's place. She shrugged them away.

But her future seemed far from hopeless. As the wife of Travers King, she could always be a power among the restless, brilliant followers of Elsie Ames. Surely nothing could be more fascinating than the constant stimulus of intercourse with the great new composers, artists, novelists, that always mingled with the extravagant women and substantial men of that set. And the substantial men were often charming, more charming than the lions.

It was strange how completely she had grown to overlook her husband in any plan for the future. She thought of him only as a power of position and money without which there couldn't be any comfortable plans.

She wondered if Landsberg's patronage of art and Oriental brilliancy of understanding would ever win him a place in the outer fringe of Elsie's following.

How narrow those Douglases and Kings and Warrens were! Teddy was welcomed back without a murmur after years of transgression from their silly tenets. But the woman!

Her anger returned in a flood and blurred her mind. And soon she was lying back in her pillows and sobbing. After all her schemes and plans, only one thing counted now: she had lost her lover, and she was still terribly in love.

The next day, she stayed in bed till noon and slept and tossed fitfully. The weather was unusually warm, and she lunched late on the balcony outside her room.

Her decision for the future was to go at once to Paris, then to New York and to continue to identify herself with Mrs. Ames and her set during the season. Of course, there would be a man; but she told herself confidently and wearily that she would never again be aroused to emotion. Hereafter she would be careful to manage men skilfully and keep them still unsatisfied and forever craving. She would entertain more lavishly than she had done in previous winters. She must show herself to the world recovered at last from a protracted, irritating affair. There must be a new brilliancy and charm about her. She sighed at the issue she was just beginning to face.

As an awful privilege, her little boy, fetched from his nursery on the top floor, was lunching with her. He was a bit scared at his lovely mother's sudden drop into domesticity and tremendously awkward without his nurse's aggressive handling of his food for him.

Anne sometimes put her fat little son into untried situations, to see if it were possible to be stirred by a new tenderness; but he was so unconscionably stupid and round-eyed and "King-like" that he never did more than amuse her and often annoyed her. Today he had been mumbling constantly about "cawtching hop-grassers" and, inspired in a fatal moment by the remembrance of a particularly brilliant catch, he shot out his little fist and upset his glass of water. In a fit of irritation Anne jumped up and struck the child. He at once set up a most dismal roar.

"Stop crying, Travers," she said and shook him lightly.

She turned him toward the door, meaning to give him up to his nurse.

Then she saw her husband standing in the doorway.

"Good morning," she said, a trifle confused.

"Good morning." He turned to the butler. "Take Master Travers."

When they were alone she walked nervously over to her chair and sat down.

"Why are you here?" she asked.

"I arrived at two this morning and went directly to mother's house. She died—suddenly—last night." He was examining her sternly as he spoke.

She started up.

"Why wasn't I told? At least—"

He sneered faintly,

"Oh, Anne! You know what your attitude toward mother has always been. You have no grievance to cherish, because we let her die without your tender ministrations."

Their meetings were always like this—his tone scornful, sarcastic; hers helplessly irritable.

"Ah! Then you've not come here for sympathy?" She was trembling. "Don't worry. I shan't disgrace you; I am still conventional enough to wear mourning."

He seemed almost curious as he watched her. "How vulgar you can be!" he said softly. "I came here simply to tell you of mother's death; but everything here quite spurs me on to new efforts."

She looked at him quickly, then walked nervously to the balustrade of the balcony and sat down.

"It is a matter of business—something I have been thinking about for several years," he continued slowly.

"And your mother stood in the way?" she asked unsteadily.

"With her fine ideals, she stood in the way."

She shrugged, but felt herself sick and haggard.

"You mean—divorce?"

"Yes. It is the only thing that can conceivably make me happy. Surely I have the right now to be selfish."

Wide-eyed, she stared at him.

He looked steadily at her and dwelt scornfully on the material gain for her. "Of course, you will get the divorce. I promise you sufficient alimony. The boy will be all I shall insist upon."

"I don't want the boy. I won't take alimony!" She was shivering and flushed with excitement. "You will make sure that everyone knows you as the wronged, merciful husband. But I shall have my freedom; that is enough."

"You are splendidly rhetorical and insincere," he said, and with truth.

She was sobbing angrily.

"You will please not do anything for at least six months," he said. "It will be only decent."

Then he left her.

CHAPTER VII

"I HAVE news for you," said Anne uneasily. She was lunching at Sherry's with Mrs. Ames.

"No! That's not possible. This is the Christmas season, dear," objected the magnificent Elsie. "There can be no news when there is peace on earth, good-will to men."

Anne laughed lightly. "This simply proves that Christianity is obsolete."

Elsie leaned over the table. "I am sure *yours* is, or you wouldn't rush about so with that young Jew—Straus, or Cohen, or whatever his name is."

"Landsberg— But what else is there to do? In mourning, one can't keep pace with *you*. One must associate with people who have moments of leisure."

"Perhaps!" There was skepticism in her tone. "But people are talking—"

"Besides," Anne interrupted, "this hasn't anything to do with my news. You don't seem eager to hear."

"Horribly so."

"Very well, then. Prepare for a shock." Anne's voice was more than ever sharp and metallic. "I am going to divorce my husband."

There was a moment's silence. Then Elsie pushed her chair back an inch and stared.

"You are insane," she gasped.

"Not at all. I have my plans completed. Early in the spring—some time in Lent—I shall slip away quietly and establish a residence somewhere—I haven't quite decided. I shan't change the main decision, however."

Elsie was urgent.

"But you *must*."

Anne shook her head slowly.

"You must. Forgive me if what I am going to say is brutal. Everybody, knowing your intensely respectable husband, will at once surmise that you were forced into your decision, that Travers discovered you in an indiscreet moment."

"But what do I care for what people say? My friends—"

"In the present stage of civilization one has no friends. Don't forget that."

"Elsie, you are kind and brutal; but you can't dissuade me."

With a despairing shake of the head, Mrs. Ames surveyed her companion. "When you come back to New York, you will find it very dull at first; but you will soon make new friends."

"Even you will have deserted me—when I come back?"

Anne bent earnestly forward.

Mrs. Ames failed to meet this squarely.

"After all, I am only human," she said.

"To answer in time-worn phrases isn't to be frank," said Anne, and let the subject drop.

Mrs. Ames was insistent. "You know, divorce hurts even a woman who has never progressed beyond being a tender wife and gentle mother, and who is patently in the right in all respects. With *you*, who have already been talked about, it will be perfectly fatal."

"I am sorry my future will be so grim."

She had expected just this.

* * * *

Late that afternoon, as she sat with Landsberg in her drawing-room, she wondered if he would, after all, be the only one to welcome her back to New York on that bleakest day of her dull future.

She looked at him and noticed for the first time that there was a slight change in his appearance. He seemed heavier, although still elegantly slim; there was a new sleekness that tokened a steady increase in weight. The eyes appeared more strikingly those of the Jew. She turned her eyes away and felt within her a return of her first dislike for him.

"I have planned a charming day's excursion," he was saying. "We could do it Sunday in my motor."

"It is too late for motor trips."

"Not at all." His voice was assertive. "The weather is mild. I shan't let you off without a compelling reason."

She smiled,

"You manage my social engagements very shrewdly. You keep my engagement book—'Monday, Tom Landsberg, breakfast, luncheon, dinner. Tuesday, the same.' And so on."

"Yes, and usually I am left in gnawing solitude on Monday and Tuesday and so on. But my perseverance has had a slight reward."

"Oh!" she shrugged. "You quite wear one out. One often accepts to be rid of you."

He bent his head. "That is unkind."

A look of pain was in his eyes; she suddenly felt sorry for him.

"But," he continued, "I submit willingly, since you are spending Sunday with me."

"Perhaps; I don't promise."

"When you concede that much, I am content."

CHAPTER VIII

As the winter passed, Anne saw Landsberg almost constantly. Although he never succeeded in winning from her a definite acceptance of his projects, he soon learned to interpret her evasions and to act upon those which seemed encouraging.

His manner was peculiar; he never asked, "Would you do this or this with me?" He would simply remark, "We are going to do this or this," and if she refused he would treat the matter as if she had unkindly broken an engagement. The unusual combination in him of humility and arrogance made this method of attack effective.

As their strange intimacy grew, she found it increasingly difficult to hold out against him. Still, for her the old feeling of dislike persisted and at times tempted her deliberately to ignore him.

But she found that impossible now. Often, too, when she was with him at restaurant, there would come to her a feeling of broken pride if she chanced to see any of her friends nearby; and she would flush and tremble whenever curious or amused glances were flashed at her table.

The people she knew were still cordial, sometimes effusive—an alarming sign. Since Anne was in mourning, a lack of invitations was to be expected; but the hasty calls between engagements with which she had at first been greeted, after the death of Travers's mother, gradually became less frequent.

This Landsberg affair argued a questionable situation. It would be best to watch cautiously for developments. Elsie, after repeated scoldings, had cried warningly: "I am going to bruit abroad your plan of divorcing Travers; I may even sell it to the papers. You must be brought to your senses, before it is too late."

After that, all Anne's friends suddenly rushed once more to see her and to protest their indignation at "this hideous rumor about a divorce."

"But it's true, dear," Anne would say.

They would shake their heads and kiss her sadly. When they were gone she would sob and despair.

She said nothing to Landsberg until all arrangements had been made and she was to leave New York in a fortnight. He had been silent for a moment. Then he had smiled with a certain frankness and boldness that had startled her.

"And then you will marry me," he had said.

She had laughed at him.

CHAPTER IX

THE newspapers had clamoured about the return to New York of "Mrs. Anne Gilbert King, recently divorced from Travers King." Anne had established herself at the Plaza. It was November, quite the most trying time of the year for her, with the season in its first gaiety and the opening of the Opera only a week off.

With her habitual shrug, she had just heard announced "Mrs. Paine, Miss Gladys Shipley."

Both women were undeniably beautiful, Mrs. Paine excessively smart, Miss Shipley excessively ingenuous. One knew instinctively that Miss Shipley lisped. Anne submitted smilingly to Mrs. Paine's kiss and the ingénue's demure handshake.

"Our charming colony flourishes still," said Anne to Mrs. Paine. "I had no trouble in sub-renting my cottage."

"You are more fortunate than I," complained Mrs. Paine. "But, of course, my house isn't in a fashionable district now."

Miss Shipley laughed softly. "Poor Agnes."

Mrs. Paine grimaced,

"Three years ago, one simply had to buy to secure an attractive place. I never thought the center of things would shift so in such a short time."

Anne smiled,

"You shouldn't complain, Agnes. Your cottage has aided you in getting rid of two husbands."

"Yes; I suppose it can't be expected to be useful forever."

Anne had learned to enjoy conversation of this sort in moderation.

She now turned to Miss Shipley,

"My dear Gladys, your new play is exquisite; it should keep you in New York until June."

"But it is of a naughtiness!" exclaimed Mrs. Paine. "When the second-act curtain went down on that remark of Jack Brunner's—"

"Yes," Anne agreed. "It left the audience in embarrassed silence. We all wished for something to relieve the tension."

"By the way," remarked Mrs. Paine. "You *must* join the new club we have organized. We call it 'Fin de Siècle.' The most delightful people are in it—only twenty-five of us—the new tenor who is going to make such a sensation; Madge Bloomingdale—"

"Jack Bunner," put in Miss Shipley softly.

"Oh, I can't remember them all," continued Mrs. Paine. "But they're all delightful. Mr. Landsberg might come along with you."

"Thanks!"

"Where are you dining tonight? Won't you join us downstairs at seven-thirty?"

"Some other time. I shall spend the evening up here."

When she was dressed for dinner she found herself waiting for Landsberg with something like eagerness. There was in him a subtlety that would be stimulating after the shallow cheapness of these women. She shivered as she thought back over her life in the typical divorce colony. And worst of all, she had grown accustomed to it, had in the end almost enjoyed it.

In the last few years she had discovered with a feeling almost of fear that she was capable in a short time of adapting herself to a new environment, which was, however, always on a lower plane than that to which she had formerly been accustomed. She was able to lower herself to meet new conditions.

Her married life had proved that she was powerless to measure up to standards higher than her own had been. She felt afraid to match her wits against the Jew's. Surely, her keenness of perception, her fine feelings must have become blunted and coarsened. New York was hateful; it called up in her all that most craved refinement and it offered her only the Fin de Siécle Club. Then, in a moment, it aroused her hopeless desire for Teddy Winters, and made her long tremblingly to be in his arms, and again it offered her only Landsberg, whose physical appeal was to her almost totally lacking.

The intolerable humiliation, however, she had not yet faced. She knew vaguely what it would be like; for she had herself been schooled in the etiquette of snubbing women who had blundered. It would not be in her power patiently to suffer insults and by years of discreet generalship to gain back something of her former prestige. She had always lived too passionately in the present for that. With her divorce she had paid for her reckless sacrifices to the man she loved. She had lost everything; she would never strive to win any of it back. But she still was proud; therefore she suffered keenly.

People had formerly looked on her intimacy with Landsberg as probably an eccentric pose, surely at the worst only a harmless romance. Even so they had frankly shown disapproval. Now they would no longer treat her frankly; their attitude would be a perpetual sneer. And she suddenly felt that she hated Landsberg as if he had been the cause of her ruin.

She wondered who would be the next man in her life. She was done with falling in love. Would the romance in her, thwarted and perverted, degenerate into mere craving?

In her bitter mood she strove to believe so; but at heart she knew that just as her warped pride persisted, her romanticism would revive and shed a dimmed radiance in the future over a succession of men. But there would never again be love; she would no more deck herself for sacrifice.

These women who had just gone always left her with a sense of her own superior refinement. Was her refinement a weapon to turn against women and to lay aside in her dealings with men? Fine feelings in Teddy had given place in the end to exuberant animal spirits; and she had too often not revolted. The urgency of her body had been able to silence everything else.

She could be cruelly frank with herself on occasion. No begging the question here!

When Landsberg stood before her in the fire-lit room she rose quickly from her chair and held out her hand to him. She recoiled slightly as her hand met his. His was soft, almost flabby.

"Let me have a look at you," she said caressingly.

She moved back a step and switched on the light.

He was standing with the same graceful bend forward that she had noticed particularly years before on her verandah. The steady increase in his weight had been relentless. He had lost all traces of his former slenderness. Not yet stout, he seemed compact of ripening sleekness and incipient flabbiness. His faultless clothes only accentuated the change.

"You are very different," was all she said.

He smiled,

"Please forgive. And *you* are also very different."

"Shall I too ask 'Please forgive?'"

"Beauty can never be forgiven," he answered, and, still examining her intensely, said softly, "You will seem more unreasonable than ever; but you will be more easy to manage."

She looked her bewilderment.

"Never mind. People who read others are either stupid or incorrect."

She regarded him with narrowed eyes. "Your paradoxes have grown more elaborate."

He dropped into seriousness. "I am too much in earnest for conceits. I assure you, my mind hasn't suffered any fatty degeneration; but tonight I want only to say again and again that you are beautiful and that I love you."

"But I asked you here to entertain me, not to bore me," she broke in laughingly.

"You have never let me talk on that subject. I shouldn't bore you, I know," he replied and laughed with her. "I can even make love in epigrams and paradoxes, on occasion."

"Spare me anything too personal tonight," she said and sighed. "I want to hear about New York. I arrived yesterday and went directly to a play."

During dinner, he talked amusingly and brilliantly on the subjects she brought up. She listened abstractedly; the change in his appearance fascinated her, and for the first time she felt a stirring at once of physical repulsion and attraction. The disagreeable servility, the self-conscious arrogance were less apparent. His attitude was more consistently one of suave humility.

But as she sat across the table from him, she became increasingly aware of a new lure. His mouth was heavier and fuller, and in the expression of his face there was a sensuality carefully repressed. Only the eyes remained quite the same. She felt him repellent; yet for the first time with him she was vaguely aroused.

She had the liqueurs served in the dining-room and dismissed the waiter.

With an unexpected return to the personal, he remarked,

"I waited so anxiously for an invitation, all the time you were away."

"One invites only one's enemies to such a place," she answered with a shrug.

"No; but you can resist my onslaughts so much better when you are away from me. It is hopeless to wear a person out by correspondence."

"Are you preparing to begin the attack?" she asked.

"Precisely. You will come with me to a play tomorrow night and to the 'Midnight Frolic' afterwards."

"I probably shall; but it won't be your inflexibility that will drive me there. I can't face my new situation without the background of a dinner-jacket, that's all."

They laughed.

"And at last I qualify as a really substantial background?" he asked.

"Do you know," she dismissed the question and showed herself serious, "tonight you have embroidered on every conceivable theme but yourself. That's not natural. Tell me now how matters have gone with you—all these ages."

"But my letters—"

"Were strangely reticent, after the first effusions," she broke in.

"Very well; if you really wish to know. Until last winter, with you, I had always considered myself a confirmed celibate. Then I fell in love, as you may have gathered before this. Suddenly you left me and I discovered

that what you had aroused was—part of it—singularly aimless and purblind, a sort of renascence of extremely young manhood."

His voice sounded deeply musical and compelling. She leaned forward.

He continued,

"Of course, I decided to satisfy my new spirit of adventure; but I also decided against limiting myself to one woman."

"So you have ranged at large? Or are you implying a seraglio?" she asked harshly.

"I have ranged at large," he answered, "And I have learned that for you there will always be a worship that will beget self-control."

She got up quickly.

"Where has our sense of humor fled? This conversation is worthy of Ouida."

As he followed her out of the dining-room, he commented on her last remark.

"That was all wrong, you know—what you have just said. I wasn't going in for decadence; I was merely being frank."

"I insist, you were merely being sensational," she answered quickly.

She felt herself trembling and flushed at his nearness as he lit her cigarette for her.

He returned calmly to the subject of their plans for the winter. There were several quaint old book stores and antique shops which he had discovered during her absence. He and she would make many excursions to these dim sanctuaries. Like all collectors, he delighted to delve occasionally into the humble places. There was a constant spirit of adventure in the possibility of chancing upon something rare. Landsberg couldn't ever recall ever having been so fortunate; but he never lost the enjoyment of the thing.

"I shall certainly be rewarded with a perfect masterpiece," he said, "in seeing your yellow hair and your pallor against the cobwebby twilight."

The theatrical season promised to be less mediocre than usual. They would "take in" the plays together.

That she would reign in his opera box was, of course, a certainty. He mentioned casually that she might ask guests as often as she wished, but that personally he should prefer that he and she always share it exclusively.

As he was leaving he bent over her hand and said,

"And you are not yet ready to consider marriage?"

"The 'yet' argues boundless tenacity," she answered lightly, and knew as she looked at him that his self-control was not infallible.

"You laughed at me before; now you answer evasively. I am enormously encouraged."

"Please don't be," she protested.

CHAPTER X

"LIKE all women today, I am always seated at a table eating when I pass through great crises," she suddenly remarked.

Looking superb and queenly, Elsie Ames had just entered the "Frolic" with a party. A subdued, dignified commotion of the sort that inevitably attracts attention from the show-girls for a moment had ended in Elsie's finding a satisfactory seat at a nearby table. Her satellites quietly arranged themselves about her. She directly faced Anne.

Anne's remark to Landsberg had been careless; but she felt sick and faint as Elsie's eyes met hers. That lady raised her hands in suave astonishment and smiled an amused, cool recognition. Anne returned it in just the same fashion. Mrs. Ames made a laughing remark; at once, all the people at her table glanced curiously around and pantomimed their restrained surprise and polite greeting. Anne's mocking smile fenced them off skilfully. She was furious with herself for the flush in her pale cheeks.

Deliberately, for Elsie's benefit, she leaned towards Landsberg and smiled her most winning smile. "One is trained unconsciously to meet issues. Nothing finds one quite unprepared."

His tone was all of admiration.

"Don't ever try to generalize from your own conduct. *You* never fail in a crisis; others *do* fail."

"I am perfectly sure Mrs. Ames never would fail in a crisis."

"A woman like Mrs. Ames never precipitates a crisis. She is careful to shun anything vital."

They lapsed into silence.

Contentedly he watched her, with almost an air of comfortable ownership. She felt a dull anger overwhelming her; for a time she sought for something clever to say, then she sighed and drooped visibly. Depression was making her inattentive. Hearing a burst of laughter at Elsie's table, she wondered grimly what they were saying about her. She wondered what sort of effect she should produce if she should begin to cry.

She glanced at him quickly and surprised a look of subtle scorn in his eyes.

"I am tired and bored," she announced. "I am going."

In the lift he remarked,

"You didn't follow up your first triumph."

With his relentless cleverness, he had noticed what in her blind rage she was dimly conscious of. She had after all failed miserably. For the first time before him her perfect poise had wavered and he showed the disappointment of an artist. He had forgotten that he was a Jew who humbly worshipped a woman exalted above him.

"Why follow up that sort of triumph?" she asked. "What advantage could I win from people I no longer see, except by chance?"

"One triumphs most at the mere memory of having triumphed, having shown oneself superior to an adversary," he returned. "There isn't any question of a tangible advantage."

"That is made up for the occasion. It doesn't apply to you or to myself."

He hesitated,

"It was dreadfully pedantic," he admitted.

She laughed wearily,

"I had always imagined you would scold gracefully."

"I am glad you 'get' the purpose behind the clumsiness."

He looked straight into her eyes, an unusual thing for him.

"You disappointed me," he announced simply.

She shrugged.

"I am overwhelmed. Put me into your motor and take a taxi, if you please."

In the limousine, her depression and anger left her sullen but clear-sighted. She could not forgive herself for the sharp pain she suffered at her first encounter with these people, among whom she had so recently been a power. The memory of their chilly amusement made her eyes burn with tears. It was the hideous injustice of it that hurt. She didn't feel it the less keenly because of the knowledge that she would never attempt to palliate their hostility.

Her thoughts veered around to Landsberg. His calm disapproval stung her to fury.

Then, in a flash, she began to sob hopelessly at the desolation of her life; she felt an illogical dread of losing even this man, who inspired rather a feeling of revulsion than of attraction in her. With his intense cleverness, he kept her from realizing his power over her, his gradual success in eliminating all others from her life. She knew herself alone, if he should desert her; but she seemed, one might almost say, charmed, into gloomy acceptance of matters as they stood. She failed to ask herself why she was thus without the power of making new friends. At this, the most critical period of her life, he was shielding her from the scorn of others and at the same time reaping his own advantage. She realized now that he was absolutely essential to her.

CHAPTER XI

For months he mapped out each day for her, and she shrugged her acceptance of his arrangements or declined petulantly to consider them. She grew to loathe New York and yet was incapable of getting away from it. It

seemed to her the animate symbol of the social convention she had slighted. It glared and rumbled and shrieked its unjust hatred. She had cheated New York Society of its rightful prey—herself abject and humble—and the protecting city itself had swelled into indignation.

Her health was wretched and she looked to drugs as her only relief from physical exhaustion and mental anguish. She felt constantly worried about herself, lay in bed at night in terror if her heart throbbed more loudly than usual, brooded before her dresser at the startling pallor of her face and the new hollows between her shoulders and breasts, shivered in desperate fear at the dangers of the morphine habit.

This winter alone in New York had tortured her and left her shattered. She had been able in the end to shrug away all her other pains and sorrows and disappointments—that is, all but the desertion of Ted Winters; but, when this winter drew to an end, she could tell herself bitterly that she was beaten, that her pride was at last broken.

The cruelty of New York and its people, the feeling of physical sickness, were largely responsible for her morbid weariness of life; but Landsberg had his share in the sorry business.

Skilfully keeping watch over her, he put his plans before her and was rewarded by complete success, except on the few occasions when she rebelled and rushed to the Fin de Siècle Club for relief. Disgust at the vulgarity she encountered there would speedily drive her back to him.

By imperceptible gradations, his attitude shifted from the new confidence of suave humility to a faintly scornful equality with her. This last stage gave place on rare occasions to a mood of exalted physical passion. And subtly he let her know that she was becoming for him more and more like other women.

By occasional tender solicitude and by an even more infrequent, cruel scrutiny, he made increase in her the anxiety she felt in regard to her health, and her terror that her beauty might be fading. By a certain diffidence in his discussions with her, he seemed to imply a diminished relish for her cleverness.

"You *are* amusing," he would reply politely to her flashes of wit.

Once he remarked tenderly, "Dear Anne, you must need a rest; you haven't said anything worthy of your standard for a week."

Convinced that her charm in conversation was weakening, she strove desperately to be brilliant and succeeded only in straining for effects.

Often he would leave her immediately after the theatre or even after dinner; and she would know that he was going to another woman. He never concealed the fact that he still had affairs with women.

Anne had clung to the Fin de Siècle Club as if it were the tangible proof of her independence of Landsberg. Doggedly she had kept him in ignorance of its silly vulgarity; she had never mentioned to him the names of the members. He was amused at her mysterious reticence and not at all curious.

On Good Friday, Mrs. Paine entertained the members in bizarre fashion at a *Danse Macabre*. Her magnificent house, gorgeously furnished throughout in vermilion and gold, was rendered bewildering by the use of black decorations. The army of footmen was in sombre black with vermilion shoebuckles. Crucifixes and pietas were strewn about, and woven into a frieze around the ballroom. Needless to say, the guests drank perfectly conventional champagne, got intoxicated in a perfectly healthy manner and disregarded the sacrilegious intention of Mrs. Paine in delightfully robust fashion.

The cheapness of it all infuriated Anne.

The effect on Miss Shipley was quite what one would have expected from this lady of the lisp.

Slipping an arm about Anne's waist, she simpered,

"I feel just as if I were living through a Balzac orgy. Agnes is *too* wonderful."

Then she sped off in pursuit of Mr. Bunner, the leading man in her play.

The gay strum of the orchestra, the elation of dancing and the taste of fine champagne made the first hours of the affair vaguely enjoyable to Anne, although the black ribbons (each with a crucifix painted on it in gold) that hung from the ballroom ceiling annoyed her. But the late supper was intolerable. The men were nearly all stupidly intoxicated and the women silly. While two "society dancers" presented their fox-trot to the strains of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Anne turned with relief to Jack Bunner, who was beside her, seemingly rational in spite of his vague stare and unmistakable sway.

"Haven't the arrangements gone a trifle astray?" she asked. "Not only is Gladys Shipley not beside you, but she's actually at another table."

"My doing," he answered with a chuckle. He was just drunk enough to be frank

She laughed. "Why?"

He lurched slightly towards her and mumbled,

"She wouldn't give me any freedom. Delightful girl and all that—but a tyrant. She's almost reconciled—has a visitor often between the acts—s'name's Landsberg."

"Really?" She appeared curious.

But he had already rambled away from Miss Shipley and Landsberg and was telling her a delightfully improper story. At the end of it her laugh satisfied him that he was as successful as ever.

In bed the next morning, Anne pressed her fingers to her aching eyes. Her life was a failure; she must not let it be a catastrophe. That Landsberg was having an affair didn't surprise her; but the knowledge that he was having an affair with Gladys Shipley made her faint with terror.

Never, since her divorce, except in moments of despair, had she looked to the future in any but one way: if the worst came to the worst, she would marry Landsberg. Now, for the first time, there came to her the question of whether or not he would ever withdraw his proposition of marriage.

Would the worst conceivable future after all be marriage with him? He had always spoken to her with laughing carelessness of the other women in his life; in his treatment of them, the Oriental strain in him predominated. Well, here she was on terms almost intimate with one of them. He must never know that; and yet, wouldn't it be perfectly possible, even probable, that he would find out?

She felt that she must act, and at once.

CHAPTER XII

With the flaring up of the lights, the chattering arose, "like sparrows in ivy," as Anne had once remarked. The great damask curtain had rolled superbly down, and the audience at the Metropolitan was resigning itself to sweltering heat and gossip.

Anne bent to Landsberg and slightly touched his hand. "I have been thinking—deeply. I will marry you."

He inclined his head gracefully forward.

"The opera, tonight, should have been 'Tristan,' instead of this cheap, flimsy 'Gioconda.'"

Her heart was throbbing. "You accept my acceptance?"

He smiled, and in his face there was an expression almost faunlike.

"But yes!" he murmured. "I must tell you, though, I have decided that the spirit of worship doesn't 'go' in marriage, any more than in other relations."

"That is sensible," she admitted. "Where there are no ideals, there can be no disappointments."

"That's not my point. Since I shan't worship, I shan't trust; but, being a Jew, I shall keep you perfectly guarded."

There was no trace of embarrassment in the confession of his race. In the fullness of his triumph he now almost vaunted the fact always before so absolutely denied.

"Am I to go about the streets in one of those tight-shuttered Turkish af-

fairs?" She spoke carelessly; but the calm insult in his tone made her flush.

"Practically. I have studied you—so carefully. Years ago, one night I was prowling about 'The Oaks'—I saw you drive up with Winters. Then, your conduct struck me as exalted, scorning convention; I have changed since. I shall watch you untiringly."

The ignominy she was suffering made her tremble; she wished she had the courage to get up and leave him, never to see him again.

He continued coolly,

"First of all, you must give up your Fin de Siècle Club. Such people are impossible.

"I don't want to hear any more of this wretched opera. You don't care about the next act, do you? That war-horse air, 'Cielo et Mar'—"

Dumbly she got up.

The curtain had risen while he was speaking. When they came out into the red-carpeted corridor behind the boxes, they found it quite deserted.

She gave herself up to his embrace with a feeling of passion and revulsion.

THE LEAFLESS BOUGH

By Harry Kemp

SINCE you have gone away from me
My very life has grown
Bare as a leaflet bough from which
A singing bird has flown,—

A leafless bough in a windy sky
Without one hint of green:
But through the barren twigs of it
The stars themselves are seen.

WHEN a woman loves a man to distraction you may be assured she is either very young, very old or very homely.

MARRIAGE, in the majority of instances, is nothing more than an exalted state of organized charity.

TO a woman, love at 20 is a valley; at 30, a jungle; at 40, the Andes.

TACTICS

By June Gibson

I

THREE women were after the same man.

One ran her cool fingers through his blond hair and pressed close to him and breathed against his cheek.

One dropped her head demurely and sighed and allowed a tear to drop on his hand. . . .

One flirted with another man.

II

Three men were after the same girl.

One sent her pearls and Poms and orchids and bonbons and season tickets to the opera.

One wrote poems about her and kissed the hem of her gown and spoke of love on an island . . .

One kept her waiting an hour while he spoke to a beautiful woman.

MY SONGS

By Clinton Scollard

MY songs are all like mating birds
At dewy twilight caroling,
Linking their music-making words
Within the dewy groves of spring.

My songs are all like wooing airs
Blown from the bloom-enamored south
Where evermore I dream Love fares
With a thin reed-pipe set to mouth.

And in them each, and in them all,
There is some thought to tell of her,
And how from dawn to evenfall
I am her constant worshiper;

Aye, till the stars are in eclipse
At sweep of morn's auroral wing,
For it was she who touched my lips,
And it was she who bade me sing!

NOTHING EVER HAPPENS

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

FOR the first time in his life Peter Martin gave his attention to the distressing problem of whether or not he was drunk.

He said to himself:

"I must be drunk or I would not be wondering whether I am or not."

He added:

"And yet how keenly I argue! If I were drunk, would I be able to reason so logically?"

To his dismay the word kept singing on in his ears in an absurd refrain: logically, logically, log . . .

He laughed heavily, looked vaguely around the grill, and his blinking eyes came carefully back to his companions.

Opposite him, with his huge stomach creased by the edge of the table, sat Hubbleston, wagging one finger, growling denunciations, fat and flushed. He looked like a monstrous pussy-cat. On his right hand was Frank Effingham with his grey hair, his thin, hard face, and his quiet, repulsive smile. It was a fixed smile in which he silently bared his teeth, and it carried somehow a suggestion of sinister reserve.

His scrutiny done Peter's mind returned to the business of self-classification. His head was swinging about and about; he wondered whether he would be able to walk across the floor and dodge those tables that were dancing up and down in such a silly manner.

Peter felt suddenly melancholy to the point of tears. How bitter, how empty, a thing was life! But it immediately occurred to him that Hubbleston's nose was really very funny. And he wanted to laugh, to rock with laughter.

His brain winged back to a few hours earlier. Effingham and Hubbleston were his neighbors in Rose Villa Park, and often all three stayed in town for a friendly dinner together, with, sometimes, a play afterwards. But Peter had always before contented himself with a bottle of beer. He wasn't accustomed to liquor as they were, and tonight, acting upon a reckless whim, he had followed their pace, drink by drink, and had even gone them one better. Why had he done so? And at that private query the unconscious cause, the reaction of which his temporary incaution was but a symbol, found expression in three tragic words:

"Nothing ever happens!" said Peter Martin in a low voice.

For half a minute Effingham gave him the benefit of his dark smile, but Hubbleston did not even cease from his flowing talk. He was in his comfortable, abusive stage which puffed out his own individuality bold and tremendous, and veiled all other voices and faces with dimness. On he grumbled:

"So that's what I say. I don't care who it is. I don't care a hang! I'm not that kind. If I found anyone tampering with my private affairs I'd kill him. Yes, I would! And lookahere! If anyone went to my house unknown to me, or if anyone tried to get familiar with my wife, or if anyone . . ."

Peter, in a flash of sane perceptions, thought with a sigh of the fatuousness of all such talk. Who on earth would ever care to thrust his fingers into Henry Hubbleston's dingy affairs, and who could ever have the courage or the desire to make love to Mina, his equally obese wife? And dingy was the word

for everything! They were three dull men, and they didn't count.

Peter was a bookkeeper, Hubbleston was a clerk in an insurance company, and Effingham was an agent of real estate. Madame Destiny took no lovers as insignificant as they. Stories might not be written about them, their lives were not concerned with the curious or the dramatic, they were merely futile drones. Peter had the barren satisfaction of realizing that he at least was aware of his futility. He struck one fist upon the table, slowly rubbed his eyes with his twisted fingers, and murmured once more in a voice of despair:

"Nothing ever happens!"

But Effingham, Effingham who had particularly pressed Peter to join this party, only went on smiling in his infinitely wicked way, and Hubbleston only went on mumbling and menacing.

II

HALF an hour later Peter was on his way in a sombre mood for Rose Villa Park. Hubbleston had insisted on staying until the last train, and Effingham had remained with him. Peter, in a spurt of irritation, had abruptly abandoned the two of them to their courses. Dreary nonentities! Imagine Hubbleston ever doing anything worth the recountal, anything even funny! Or Effingham, for all his sardonic air, ever slighting rules in this rule-bound world!

Peter pressed his hot face to the windows as the train clattered on past the prim suburban stations. He reflected that he was nearly forty years old and a bachelor. Nothing had ever happened to him, nothing ever would happen to him. What a devil of a life! And yet fools prated of the raptures of peace and the satisfaction of uneventfulness. Revolt, the old, high spirit of protest, sang in his heart.

As he descended at his station and climbed the hill in the direction of Maple Lane, his brain was giddy and dazed.

"Drunk!" he murmured, and gravely shook his head. "Oh, terribly drunk!"

He lifted his eyes to find himself confronting the ten small houses of Maple Lane, stacked together like crackers in a box.

As the trees rustled lightly in the drowsy air, Peter felt that it was organization that crushed and killed the wild and delicate poetry of existence. His gaze traveled across the reaches of the twinkling sky, and fell again upon the row of blank, neat, inconspicuous dwellings before him. Who dared expect anything that wasn't dull, that wasn't conventional, to occur in such compartments of obliterated individuality? It was only fitting that Hubbleston should live in one of them, and that Peter and his Aunt Gertrude should live in another. Effingham, it was true, lived in a different part of the suburb.

In the midst of his musings Peter awoke to a practical triviality. He forgot the tragedy of life in the tragedy of that fact that as usual he'd come away without his keys.

Well . . . he need not wake up Aunt Gertrude at any rate; he knew how to pry up the porch-window from the outside. And yet—it would be a pleasure to wake up Aunt Gertrude for once in her drab life. She was, it happened, some years younger than her nephew, but she was in a deeper rut, a staler stagnation. Peter saw her now as a pair of pale, aggrieved eyes, a querulous question, and an eternally swishing broom. Aunt Gertrude! Darn Aunt Gertrude!

Across his blurred brain flowed dissevered scraps of memory, hot thoughts of rage, touches of ribald, unmotivated humour.

At last he picked out his house by a slow and bewildering task of counting. It was the third from the end, he remembered. He was glad he remembered that.

Swaying upon uncertain feet, he moved up to the porch. The window, for once, opened with difficulty.

He heard a click and a snap as he struck upon the frame.

Then, with a faint creak, it slid up under his pressure.

As he stood before the opened window in front of the silent, dark row of stupid cottages, he turned to stare broodingly down at the roadway.

In that instant his mind cleared, and he had a vision of life as a thing of pathos and irony. Life was at best a farce, its humour lying like a farce in the fact that the players took their troubles with deadly seriousness. And in the outer darkness between the worlds the squatting gods grinned their mild amusement. How turn the tables and spoil the play save by laughing oneself? . . .

Over Peter's mind there dropped once more the confusing and comforting curtain of insensibility. The farce was on! He cast a final sodden glance about him.

"Nothing ever happens!" he complained in a tremulous whisper, and stepped from the open window into the room beyond.

III

His bedroom was upstairs, on the right of the hallway, and he made his way there softly so as not to arouse Aunt Gertrude, and be put to the bother of replying to her annoying questions. On the way through the hall he stumbled into a chair, and cursed under his breath. Why the deuce was Gertrude forever changing things about, shifting the positions of beds and bureaus?

He undressed in the dark, laying his clothing carefully over the end of the bed. Then he fumbled for his nightgown—Aunt Gertrude, the purchaser of his clothes, refused to buy him pajamas—and groping in the blackness, he couldn't even place the hook on which it hung. At that instant he perceived a white blur on the couch by his side. Good! Apparently the gown had merely slipped down.

Peter drew it over his head and moved forward with its capacious folds wrinkling around him. How curious everything was! His wrists seemed preposterously thick, and his legs to be encumbered with toes of lead. He felt sleepy and stupid, and yet his brain would go on whirling . . . and . . . whirling . . .

Padding across the floor, he sank into the bed with a pleased grunt of weariness. He shut his eyes and fell to wondering why the bed kept trying to hit the ceiling, and why the ceiling itself was. . . .

And then the next instant his whole startled body quivered, and the sweat jumped upon his forehead!

He could feel the blood smoothly receding from his lips.

His heart seemed to reel under the shock, then to right itself like a ship in a storm; and a wind of fright blew away the fumes and fancies from his disordered brain.

Two soft, fat, feminine arms had been placed sleepily around his neck!

Peter's heart was beating so terribly that he expected that the bed at any minute would break down under those quick, solid blows that appeared to whip the breath out of him. A woman was in his bed! How in the name of seventeen devils had she got there? Was he crazy? Was this, alas, his first accounting to alcohol, that collector of accounts? He stirred faintly and his breath came back to him in jerky gasps.

A drowsy voice murmured in his ear:

"Don' move around so, Henry, Wanna sleep."

Where had he heard that voice?

Whose was it?

Great heavens, *it was the voice of Mina Hubbleston!*

He dared not budge lest he arouse her, and he lay there thinking so rapidly that he forget one thought as fast as he conceived another.

In a moment he realized what had happened. He had correctly recalled his house as the third from the end, but in his semi-maudlin condition he had counted from the wrong end! The gentle breathing of Mina Hubbleston rose and fell; Peter's teeth began to chatter at a new consideration.

Hubbleston would come home on the eleven fifty-eight, and entering his house, would walk upstairs, open the door, come into the room, cross the floor, reach the bed— Peter shuddered in a halt; he did not dare permit his imagination to construct that final, intolerable scene. Ruined, disgraced, laughed at, how would he ever be able to clear himself? Pictured by part of the press as a maniac suffering from hyperesthesia, by another part as the wily seducer of fat Mina Hubbleston, he saw his life's foundations go down about him in a roaring topple.

Oh, why had he not appreciated peace when he had had it? Only a few moments before he had had the folly to grow caustic over Aunt Gertrude. How staunch, how real, she was after all! And how fine to be respectable, law-abiding, and—yes!—dull! To thunder with adventures—if they were like this!

Then thinly to his ears came the sound of a train. The eleven, fifty-eight! In another minute Hubbleston would be on his way up from the station. There recurred to Peter's memory the bitter and threatening harangue that Hubbleston had given only that evening regarding a situation such as this in which Peter now found himself. Only—only this was worse!

IV

CAUTIOUSLY, with meticulous carefulness, Peter slid one leg out of bed, and wriggled the other near the edge without disturbing Mina's embracing arms. He did this in a trance of feeling from which he was smartly shaken by the clink of an inserted key in the door below stairs.

Without waiting, Peter threw himself free and snatched his clothes from the head of the bed. Cramming them under his arm, he caught up his shoes and blundered in a panic for the doorway.

From the bed, Mina, sitting up, asked in a frightened whisper:

"Wha-what's the matter, Henry? Who is it? What's happened?"

Simultaneously the heavy feet of Hubbleston pounded on their solemn march through the hallway.

As Peter flew out of the door, he heard Mina Hubbleston jump from the bed, throw open the window with a clatter, and shriek unintelligibly upon the night. White with horror at this new turn of the wheel, Peter made for the stairs in a stumbling rush. As he reached the hallway, a thick and quavering voice rose in a moan of entreaty.

"Oh, Gawd! Oh, Gawd! Don't murderrr me, Mister! Don't murderrr me!"

It was Hubbleston, the pitiless avenger. Peter had a gush of relief at this exhibition of a fright equal to his own. But it made it none the less imperative for him to conceal his identity. His only hope was to escape from the house before Mrs. Hubbleston should set the neighborhood astir.

As aeon revolved by in a snug second of hesitation. Then Peter, drawing in his breath, sped down the hall in a blind and haphazard dash. Unfortunately he failed to see the bulky figure of Hubbleston kneeling before the door in an attitude of prayer. He crashed violently into the big body and fell in a noisy sprawl, his hands clutching nothingness. Hubbleston collapsed with a thin squeak like some ridiculous bubble. Peter swept his arms about his dropped apparel.

As he ran, it dawned on his mind that he was trapping himself, but in his fear he did not dare to halt, did not venture to look behind. He passed the room where Mina Hubbleston was still screaming through the window, and the next second tumbled exhausted into the attic. Peter, with a cry of joy at the kindness of chance, was suddenly aware of a means of deliverance.

He clambered up the attic-ladder, pushed off the trap that opened upon the roof, and stepped out into the air, the nightgown fluttering about his bony legs.

He stood there bewildered, his throat choked with dust, his eyes round and scared. He intended to run across the roofs until he came to his own, then to lower himself quietly through the trap in that, and get into bed as quickly as possible.

He made his way to the edge of the roof and straddled across the narrow chasm. With his clothes bundled under his arm, his shoes in one hand, and the purloined nightgown flapping around him, Peter made a picture against the sky like some fantastic goblin.

V

He had reached the last roof but one when fresh disaster befell. From around the curve of the road the beat and thud of a horse's hoofs carried to Peter's tingling ears. That could only be the night policeman, summoned by Mrs. Hubbleston's amazing series of yells. From far away a nightstick pinged out its ominous message on the reverberant pavement.

Peter was alive to the fact that he was at present as conspicuous as the moon. There was no time to lose. He dropped down hastily, his hands tugged at the near-by trap, and in the last, saving instant, he slid down into the attic of the house that was, by an irony, next to his own. But he breathed a sigh of relief as memory came to comfort him.

For the house which he had entered was inhabited by newcomers, a Mr. and Mrs. Bannock. Peter had not seen them yet, and he had heard Aunt Gertrude say only that morning that they had gone away for the week-end. So in any case he need not fear discovery here. He would bide his time until the disturbance was dead and then quietly steal next door.

As the minutes crawled by, Peter's heart began to beat more evenly. What a terrible adventure! His head ached, and he was weak from nervous fatigue. He knew that he would never lift up his voice against commonplace security again. Security was sweet, he realized now, and he was glad that he had escaped the ignominy of . . .

His nerve jumped at the unexpected sound of the doorbell. The police must be below! What on earth should be do?

He twisted his hands in despair as the discordant sound was repeated once more, and then a new noise smote his dying hopes the final blow. It was the noise of a billy striking against the lock. They were going to break in! He would be discovered. All his efforts had been in vain. Probably other people were awake now, and if he should attempt to escape by means of the roof he would be perceived.

It flashed upon him suddenly that it would be better to take a hazardous chance than to be caught meekly in a trap. He would—yes!—he would impersonate the absent Mr. Bannock.

Peter ran softly downstairs, turned the key with trembling fingers, and opened the door.

"Mr. Silas Bannock?" murmured the policeman apologetically as he glanced at Peter's obvious sleeping attire. It occurred to Peter that Mina Hubbleston had probably saved her character by omitting the choicest details of his intrusion. Apparently the officers expected to see a fully clothed burglar.

He nodded silently. He was afraid that if he tried to speak his voice would break.

"I didn't know you was home, sir; and I was going to break in. There was a thief in Mr. Hubbleston's down there, and he ran, and I didn't know but what he might have come in here."

"No," said Peter at last, in a voice that seemed strangely far away, "no one came here. You needn't bother."

As the officer turned, mumbling his thanks, his flashlight fell squarely upon Peter's nightgown, and his jaw dropped. He stepped abruptly into the house, and from the silent darkness a second man followed him.

"Now, see here," said the spokesman of the two, "there's something suspicious about this. What are you wearin' that there thing for?"

Peter, out of the tail of his eye, threw a brief glance downwards.

To his horror he saw the garment was decorated with dainty blue ribbons! He had thought it one of Hubbleston's nightgowns, and now perceived it to belong to Mina.

"I—I always wear that kind," stammered Peter.

"Say, Jim, there's a light upstairs," said the second patrolman suddenly. "Shall I go up and take a look around?"

"Yeh; you better while I watch this feller."

A few moments later the second man returned with startling news:

"Mrs. Bannock was up there, Jim, readin'. What'll I do, tell her to come down? She acts as if she was mad about something."

"You go and order her to come here. I want to see if she identifies this feller as her husband."

Peter closed his eyes and gulped.

So Mrs. Bannock was home after all! It was all over! Why hadn't he died before this occurred. How could he ever hope to explain anything so inexplicable as this whole tangled situation? The horror of being haled off to jail in one of Mina Hubbleston's nightgowns! Hell could hold no fate more evil. . . .

He opened his eyes and drew himself up for the fearful moment of revealment.

A woman stepped angrily into the room, moved over to Peter, and said promptly:

"Well, Silas, what's the matter? Why are they holding you here like this? Tell me, Officer, why are you holding my husband?"

Peter gasped. His mind was chaotic. Was he—was he Mr. Bannock's double? Was Mrs. Bannock short-sighted? Was she insane? Was he asleep? He confronted her with a hopeless and foolish air, and hardly heard the apologies of the officers as they stepped out into the night.

Peter pushed his fingers through his hair with a nervous gesture.

"See here," he began in a stammer of words, "I don't—don't know just what you—"

She interrupted him.

"Thanks for not squealing when the bulls were here, Mr. Bannock, though with those fools I don't suppose you could make 'em believe the real truth. I'll leave everything the way it is though, and I'll go as soon as it's safe to do so. Chicago Kate doesn't forget a kind act! But I thought you weren't to be home. Where were you sleeping anyway?"

Peter sank into a chair. They were both shams! She wasn't Mrs. Bannock any more than he was Mr. Bannock! Worse, she was a thief. And he was being pursued as one.

"My God!" said Peter.

VI

THE sky was grey when at last Peter unlocked the door and made his way across the damp grass to his own door. He was home again after a dreadful nightmare of actualities. He thanked heaven for the loveliness of quiet, even for the dull, methodic, and reassuring person of Aunt Gertrude. Tomorrow—or, rather, today—was Sunday, and he would sleep late and wake with a sharper appreciation of all that law and order really meant. And oh, how tired he was, how fagged and hectic!

He dragged himself upstairs and crawled into his bedroom. His head was on the pillow when a slight rustling noise at his ear attracted his attention. Then he noticed that a slip of paper was pinned on his pillow-case. He removed it, and holding it close to his eyes, he painfully deciphered what was written upon it:

Dear Nephew:

I am going away with Frank Effingham. We have discovered that we love each other. I hope that you will understand.

Yours affectionately,
AUNT GERTRUDE.

Frank Effingham! Why, he was a married man! And what had he seen in Gertrude? And how had she contrived—why had she dared—where had she—

Peter turned upon his side, and the note fell from his fingers to the floor. He groaned softly, and there was a confused singing in his ears. Then he strove to fulfill that fundamental demand, the demand of self-expression, and to embody in verbal symbols his torture, his impotence, his rage against the grinning furies. From his lips stumbled three words like a cry from the heart.

"Nothing ever happens!" wailed Peter Martin.

CRUELTY

By Olive Cassatt

A JAGUAR sprang upon a swan and tore open its white throat with his teeth.

A vulture swooped down upon a gay little humming bird that flitted among the honeysuckles.

A clumsy child ruthlessly crushed a butterfly beneath his foot. . . . .

A beautiful woman smiled at a young girl's lover.

CONCERNING ALL THE POETS OF ALL THE WORLD

By Muna Lee

HOW could they sing it all,
And leave me nothing to say,
When the world was never before
Just as the world is today?

They have used all possible praise,—
There is nothing left that is new—
Yet they never knew the delight
And the joy and the wonder of You!

A WOMAN is jealous of a man, not because she loves him, but because she hates the other woman.

LOVE is a desire to make some one happy, and a capacity for making all hands miserable.

FINE—SUPERFINE

By Archie Austin Coates

A MAN and a Woman quarreled. It was their first quarrel, and consequently everything was over between them at once. Under the glow of the low lamp they parted, forever . . . yet she was aware only of herself, standing slender and graceful against the light, as he held out his hand in a last friendly good-bye.

They shook hands, and she noted with a little feeling of regret the warmth and firmness of his fingers. She was just a little irritated, too, that they did not put more force and finality into their clasp at this important time. He remarked to himself that her own fingers were quiet and cool, just as they had been since the first day he had known her.

Would nothing ruffle the evenness of her poise? he thought. Did nothing really move her? Could she stand there so still and see him going away from her, away to a ruined and empty life?

She thought: "I am watching my life broken . . . but it is a woman's lot to suffer in silence."

He stammered a lame farewell, and she bowed her head silently. This was because she kept thinking of how badly he did such things, and that if he could not talk well he could have been so much more effective in an eloquent silence. That was her own course, and she did not speak as he stepped into the hall, nor when she heard him close the outer door behind him.

His footsteps died down the walk, and she was at last alone. She turned to the mirror, patted her hair in places, smiled in her consciousness that she had looked well that evening, then went to her room, to bed.

Half an hour later the Woman was still weeping on her pillow, mopping the remains of a wrecked life with a faint-scented handkerchief, and wondering how she could have been so cruel, to have hurt him so.

The Man walked quickly down the street, stopping only at the corner to inspect a display of new pipes at the tobacconist's. Then he went to his club, to bed.

Half an hour later he was still bending over a salad and a mug of ale; an aromatic cigar burned at his elbow on a tray-ledge, and he was wondering who had won the afternoon's ball-game.

Thus it is our tragedies hit us.

MARRIAGE is a legal ceremony in which two persons solemnly agree to keep apart until death joins them.

LINGERIE

By Kingsley Moses

"YOUR HONOR, we find for the defendant."

The foreman of the jury sat down. Slowly the spectators began to file from the court room.

Beith Argyll turned to his counsel in silent amazement.

"Appeal?" questioned that gentleman succinctly.

But Argyll shook his head.

"What's the use?" he muttered; and his eyes followed the attorney for the plaintiff.

And not for the first time. All through the long drawn quibble of the litigation the wayward gaze of Beith Argyll had wandered constantly to the counsel table where, in the midst of her sedate clients, sat Counsellor Cecily Pruyn, calm, suave, nonchalant, but with sharp eyes eternally alert ready to take advantage of the slightest slip, to profit by the most trivial twist of the evidence. Sitting there, businesslike but demure, in tailored tweeds, coat and waistcoat cut to a pattern entirely mannish, collar and four-in-hand speaking distinctly of an Avenue haberdasher, Counsellor Cecily Pruyn had directed her case with no weak or uncertain hand.

Now that the case was won, even though won on a technicality that brought an ungracious scowl to the brow of even the legally calfskin-bound Judge Knowles, the Counsellor accepted the congratulations of her clients with no display of pleasure or satisfaction. Her clear-cut, small-featured, almost childish face was perfectly imperturbable as, methodically she rose to gather up her papers. Had it not been for the smooth, sleek knot of her tightly bound brown hair it would have been almost a shock to realize that this legal luminary, if not patently petticoated was indubitably skirted. Yes, Counsellor Pruyn, now triumphant in a case that had not the slightest justice in its cause, was a woman, physically at least.

Snapping the narrow rubber band of her derby hat under her chin, and nodding perfunctorily to her ranged and grinning clients, Cecily Pruyn marched out of the court room. Passing, she glanced casually at Beith Argyll, but her glance was as impersonal as it might have been had she been gazing at a wooden bench.

Argyll, on the other hand, together with practically every other man, in the room, turned to watch the exit of the victorious attorney. Not until the trim, slight, gray-skirted little figure had switched sharply around the corner of the outer door and disappeared down the corridor did he turn to his own lawyers. Silently they returned his puzzled glance.

"No use," commented the head of the firm morosely, "she's beaten us both ways from the eight."

"But it's so apparently unjust," objected Argyll, "there's not an iota of right in their defense. They owe me the money, and they know it. It isn't right, I tell you."

"Not right, but the law," was the only answer.

Beith Argyll knitted his brows, and grinned wryly. He was puzzled, hopelessly puzzled; yet there seemed no way out. Honest, himself, rigidly just as only an undeviating Scotch Covenanter may be, not all his years in Wall

Street could accustom him to the theory that justice is not always triumphant. Right was right, and wrong wrong, in the theology of Beith Argyll there was no middle ground. He believed in a personal devil, in infant damnation, in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, in the vicarious atonement, bodily resurrection, the actuality of the Bible miracles, and, certainly, in a literal Hell.

In Beith Argyll Presbyterianism had a valiant disciple. And he could understand no other tenet save his own. He had done a big job for the firm of Montgomery, Bankers and Brokers, of Wall Street; he had been promised and had earned a big fee. Why he should not have it passed his understanding, how a petty technicality could cheat him of his due was, to him, inexplicable; and, most of all, how men could resort to such arrant knavery as had the defendants, upset his whole mental process.

For Beith Argyll was of the rare type found once in a month of legal holidays in Wall Street. For fifteen years now he had been an authority on the market; to him came the giants of the Street, and upon his opinion many, many deals had been put through. And, moreover, he based his whole financial theory upon the principle that no speculative enterprise was justifiable.

The Curb Market was, to him, anathema; and never, in the whole course of his fifteen years, had he unqualifiedly recommended the trading in an unlisted security.

"It is a speculation, *not an investment*," was his stock reply to all inquiries about the fickle beauties of mines, motors, and movie corporations.

Often, indeed, the wily manipulators had attempted to prod into the weak spot of Beith Argyll. They had failed; for he had no weak spot. When Mother Nature dipped him in the metaphorical waters of the Styx she soused him completely under, thus doing an entirely more satisfactory job than Mother Thetis.

Yet, withal, and notwithstanding his imperviousness to human peccadilloes, Beith Argyll was an engaging chap. Six feet and over in height, sandy haired and fair complexioned, his grim face had an amazing faculty of lighting up into a smile that displayed a whole rank of strong white teeth and quite swept away all prejudiced opposition. He was liked, immensely popular indeed personally, even among those whom he so frequently thwarted. And he was admired even more than he was liked. Even in Wall Street unimpeached probity, when combined with an engaging manner, has its uses.

Consequently his defeat at the hands of this sharp little beskirted lawyer rankled the more grievously in the soul of Beith Argyll. For hours, two or three at least, his ready smile deserted him.

II

It was perhaps a month later that Beith Argyll met Counsellor Cecily Pruyn at a large dinner party—Counsellor no more, but, for the night, simply Miss. In her severe, though patently enormously expensive, evening gown, the young lady was an entirely different person from the competent antagonist who had opposed him before the bar of justice.

All evening the two, lately victor and victim, chatted amiably and, toward the close of the party, eagerly. The girl's mordant wit and ready repartee stimulated Argyll's intellect; her white-rounded shoulders and piquant, flippant beauty stirred an emotion within him that was pleasantly novel. Parting, he asked her to take tea with him later in the week.

And that night Beith Argyll lay awake for fully twenty minutes, seeing through the darkness, the graceful turn of the girl's neck and the bright brown eyes that had glanced up to wish him an unspoken "good night."

The sedate little tea-party too had not been entirely disappointing. True, it was Counsellor Pruyn again who appeared, striding competently down the

Peacock Alley of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, impeccably attired in trim-fitting blue serge, with a white facing at the V of the tailored waistcoat, and a slender, silvermounted malacca walking stick swung jauntily from a chamois gloved hand. It was Counsellor Pruyn who smoked a thick Turkish cigarette in an amber holder. But it was Miss Cecily Pruyn who chattered gayly of dance and dinner party; and who, finally, accepted an invitation for a motor trip on the following Saturday afternoon.

Beith Argyll, pondering long over his midnight pipe, concluded, to his own satisfaction at least, that the manner he had mistaken for the sharpness of knavery was merely the evidence of vivacity and a razor-keen intellect. Almost an hour, that night, he lay awake, pleasant reveries puzzled and twisted about a skein of perturbing doubts.

III

To the friends of Beith Argyll, during the two days that intervened before Saturday, it was evident that something had happened to that blandly infallible oracle. A dozen times he cut important personages of the Street, twice he failed to keep engagements, once, impossible as it seemed, he almost said a kind word for an oil stock, checking himself, horrified, just in time. Sly whispers followed him up and down Broad street; but never a gossiper guessed at the real solution. That had been too wildly mythical an interpretation. All agreed, however, that something very remarkable must have happened to Argyll. The most popular explanation was that he had succumbed to the chronic liquid temptation of his race.

"Brite and fare" it must have needs been on the notable Saturday. And, piloting his long, gray roadster down the torn board-ways of William street, bright and fair it was that afternoon when Beith Argyll crawled cautiously to his rendezvous with his Portia.

The ride that followed was Pegasian. The roadster was in perfect fettle, humming smoothly it sped rhythmically out along the broad boulevards of the city, and, free of the jurisdiction of officialdom, jumped powerfully out along the Long Island highways. Come to the long white diagonals of the road through the marshes to Long Beach the roadster went into its racing stride and swept onward terrifically, salt savors filling the nostrils of passenger and driver.

Cecily Pruyn, clad now in rough homespun, and a man's soft hat to match, laughed excitedly as the big car hit the curves and spun wantonly in its reckless career. Occasionally, when the road permitted it, Argyll dared a quick glance at the dainty profile beside him; more often, however, his eyes rested upon the big bunch of violets pinned at his companion's bosom. Those violets had, in Argyll's mind, been a real speculation. He had not thought that she would wear them. Perhaps, well, perhaps, there might be something in speculation after all.

Three o'clock found them both in the water, well out beyond the raft, and lolling lazily through the big rollers. Argyll was surprised at the strength of the girl's stroke when, laughingly tossing the water out of her eyes she had challenged him to a race back to the raft. He had beaten her by barely half his length.

But back on the sunny sands the character of Counsellor quickly reasserted itself when a fat old gentleman with dripping white moustaches pounced on them with much talk of torts, releases, and subpœnas. For an infinite length of time, while the stout old gentleman rambled on, his remarks punctuated by sharp questions, Argyll had to be content to dig his toes into the dry sand and consider fondly concerning the personal devil and the literal Hell. And, the intruder gone, his companion remained full of this new twist now revealed in her case. Sitting there, Argyll watched the maroon silken clad figure of this slip of a girl and wondered grouchily if after all she were human.

"Replevin" was the last word he heard as together they dived again under a big breaker and struck out for a final swim.

Unnoticed by either of them the sky had suddenly become dark. In the west already light yellow flashes of lightning foretold the swift coming of a storm. But, lulled by the swaying heave of the waves and the rhthym of the lazy motions of their bodies the man and the girl swam on and on with no heed of the ever louder threatening rumble of the thunder. Gliding along on his side, one ear buried in the water, the man watched the regular sweep of the girl's white arm, as monotonously it rose above her head and drove outward and downward, to bury itself beneath the water.

Then suddenly came a blinding flash almost directly above them, and the crash of the concussion. The girl's arms shot up suddenly and for a minute she disappeared from sight. When she rose, close beside him, her face was dead white. A flood of pelting raindrops beat down all about them.

Immediately his arm went about her shoulders.

"Let's get back. Come on," he commanded.

As they headed back for the raft another dazzling flash seemed to dart down just behind them; and Argyll, watching closely, saw that the girl's strength seemed suddenly to have vanished. She was making but feeble progress inland, splashing badly, and thrashing at the water. "Put your hand on my shoulder," he directed quietly, "I'll tow you in."

At the raft, however, the girl gave out entirely. Argyll had to grip her firmly under both armpits to pull her up onto the boards; and safe, she lay there prostrate. Up on the beach two life-guards were tugging at a life boat.

Again the thunder roared and the lightning jagged downward in a broad sheet of blinding flame. The girl, face buried in her arms, was sobbing softly.

Argyll raised her gently, and her head nestled down into the hollow of his shoulder. His arm tightened about her. Even through the confusion of the elements and the pelting of the rain that stung sharply as it hit his bare head and shoulders, Argyll realized that she was altogether delicious. Again his arm tightened, and she responded instinctively by creeping closer. He had to lift her bodily into the life boat.

IV

But an hour later, comfortably seated in big wicker rockers, on the glass enclosed piazza of the hotel, the whole unpleasant experience seemed comparatively like a pleasant dream. Counsellor Cecily Pruyn had come back again with a vengeance. Surrounded by an admiring and most respectful circle of men, young and old, she swapped repartee with the cool incisiveness of a worldly-wise club man.

"I don't see how you've made such a success in the law," had remarked one fatuous youth who lived on his father's eminent legal reputation.

To which Counsellor Pruyn had replied: "I use my head."

The youth had left soon thereafter.

Dinner was not much more comforting to the puzzled Beith Argyll.

Timid reference to the storm had been quite disregarded.

The lady, it appeared, relished much more keenly reference to certain spectacular criminal cases in which she had been recently involved. The graphic details of a notorious murder case in which unwritten law had featured distinctly were recounted with a professional enthusiasm and lack of delicacy that sent little shivers through the spine of the sensitive and sedate young man. Uncomfortably he kept glancing round to assure himself that not every one in the restaurant was taking in the yellow narrative. A few, at least, he decided, those in the far corners of the room anyhow, were not listening. Never before was a dinner check positively welcome.

Half past eight found them, head-

lights brilliantly illuminating the tortuous road, speeding on their way homeward. Another murder case, this time a case tinctured by extravagant brutality, was pouring into his unwilling ears.

The fast growing glow of the city's lights beckoned onward, and Argyll drove fast; answering, when answer was actually necessary, only in curt monosyllables. To himself he had planned a little theater party and a gay and select supper afterward. For these he was now in no mood; and, silent, chose Fifth Avenue as the quickest and most direct route to his guest's apartment on Central Park South.

Rather bitterly he mentally corroborated the truth of his cynical observation, once lightly spoken in jest at his club, to the effect that, like mining stocks, women were a speculation, *not an investment.*

"Oh," a sordid narrative of political intrigue it was this time was interrupted, "Oh, stop at the Plaza, won't you, Mr. Argyll. I had one of the shops leave a package there for me this afternoon."

A nodded assent.

Swinging westward, Argyll brought his car to a halt across the street from the Fifty-ninth street entrance.

An hotel servant, dispatched within, returned almost immediately with a gaudily striped pastboard box which he placed in Miss Pruyn's lap.

Impatient, and frowning grimly through the gloom, Argyll jumped his machine forward out upon the trolley tracks.

He swerved too far to the left. An east-bound surface car, running fast, ploughed swiftly into them.

For a moment everything was black.

Then, with a dull throb of pain in his back, Argyll picked himself up from the edge of the curb. Two small hands, he realized, were steadying his shoulders. Toppled on its side the roadster lay a wreck.

"Are you hurt? Oh—Beith—Beith—are you hurt?" a very soft voice was saying.

"Not a bit." He lied; his shoulder pained damnably; and the girl clinging to his arm and looking pleadingly up into his face was, unconsciously, not helping matters a bit. "No, I'm not hurt. Are you?"

"Not at all. But—Beith—"

It dawned upon him that she was calling him by his first name. Some sensation—and it wasn't pain—jumped up palpitatingly inside him.

"Call a taxi-cab," was all that he said, however; addressing his remarks to one of the solicitous hotel servants.

"Yes, sir; here's one right here sir."

Silently Argyll handed the girl in; and mumbled the number to the driver. Stumbling, for the pain had come back now acutely, he climbed in after her, and slumped down on the cushions. One of her small hands lay softly on his. She was leaning forward and watching his face closely. Something in the look in her eyes, seen indistinctly in the light from the hotel brilliance, started up that queer sensation in his breast. Perhaps—

"Beg pardon, sir." The hotel doorman's voice interrupted. "Here's the lady's package, sir."

"Thank you, I'd forgotten it."

The girl reached out and took the box in her hands. What was left of the box, rather; for the package had apparently suffered more than they and was split wide open, crumpled and crushed. Heedless of the havoc wrought upon her purchase, however, the girl carelessly laid it across her knees and turned again to her companion.

"You are hurt—Beith," she whispered.

"No," abruptly. Damn that shoulder anyhow.

"But you are." The soft hand was upon his again. The hope that she wouldn't remember to take that hand away came to him with very definite force. It would be a good idea to make conversation.

"Your package," he said. "Spoiled, isn't it?"

"Oh, no." But she wasn't looking

at the package. Her eyes were still on his face.

Funny how light his head felt. How oddly his ideas ran. A strange, foolish sort of drowsiness was creeping over him. Impersonally, as if from a long way off, he looked at the battered parcel. And for the first time he noticed that all sorts of fluffy, frilly, gauzy things were sprouting out from the broken cardboard. Curiously, yet with a lack of real interest that was wholly detached from his normal mental plane, he poked his finger into the filmy stuff. To the touch it was as light as the gossamer cobweb on dewy grass. He was getting drowsy again.

And somewhere, far away, he heard his own voice. "Do you wear that stuff?" the voice was saying.

"Why," the girl drew back, startled. "Why—yes."

And at that moment there came to Beith Argyll a great light. Only one sort of an animal could wear stuff like that. A woman. A real woman.

"You really wear it?"

"Yes."

"Then—"

Odd how those blamed street lights were going out. Everything was getting awfully dim. This thing was going to require a big effort. He pulled himself together.

"Then," he said, and it was the same far away voice that was speaking: "then, Cecily—will you marry me?"

Darkness. Everything was black. But somewhere in that darkness soft lips were touching his.

THE SCHEME

By Evelyn Andrews

I LOVED them all.

Even at a distance the passionate appeal of Anthony's voice thrilled me.

When Lloyd likened me to a shimmery shaft of moonlight, I felt soothed and dreamed of an entrancing life filled with fancies.

In the presence of Arthur's leonine strength I trembled while I adored.

Whenever Fred smiled at me and displayed his fine teeth and fascinating dimples I was recklessly tempted to do things that had never occurred to me before.

When I danced with Dick I felt that life was consummate.

I loved them all.

I could not decide which one to marry.

* * *

I invited them to a garden fête.

I schemed to hurl myself into a pool.

The one who first plunged into the chill water to rescue me I should marry.

* * *

I did not marry any of them.

I drowned.

THE END OF ANNA

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

ANNA CARPENTER committed suicide. She did it stupidly, with no striving after effects, no dramatic value. Her death seemed as unfinished as her life. At thirty-five, after ten years of an apparently happy enough marriage, early in the afternoon of a calm, clear day, she swallowed a dose of rather unpleasant poison and died before anyone found out about it.

The incompleteness of Anna Carpenter's death lay in her own thoughtlessness. She did not leave even one short note to tell of her reasons. There was nothing well-rounded about the affair. One expects at least a note from a suicide. It is little enough, considering the annoyance the whole thing causes. Hurriedly, hysterically written, left on the dresser to be discovered by the first horrified intruder, a note forms the final, definite thing to talk about. Anna Carpenter never liked to write. She proved her own incompetence, her inadequacy, her love of avoidance of duties, by neglecting note-writing now. No one ever knew why she chose to escape from a continuance of life as it had come to her.

II

ANNA'S younger sister found the body. It was late afternoon. Anna must have taken the poison about one o'clock, it was proved later. Ruth, as was her wont, came by to get Anna to go for a walk or a call. Ruth, who was married to a clerk in a haberdashery—a well-appearing chap, too, who could criticize your cravats and tell you if your trousers were of a proper cut—lived in an apartment similar to Anna's, though a trifle less expensive. Anna's husband, a city salesman for a spice concern, was doing well and his commissions were far above what they had been at the time of his marriage, almost far enough to make him talk, ambitiously, of a permanent savings account in a year or two.

Ruth usually called for Anna about three o'clock. If it was a nice day, the two women would meet other women of their acquaintances, whom they called "the girls," and, in groups of three or more, would go downtown, spending a pleasant hour or two looking in the shop windows on Fifth Avenue or on the less pretentious, but to them, more accommodating side streets.

Then Anna would go home, stopping in at a neighborhood combination meat and vegetable market to purchase her supplies for the evening meal, cooking it so that it would be ready just when Fred Carpenter got in, which was usually about half-past six. Fred did not dress for dinner, but contented himself by washing his hands, hurriedly, as adequate preparation. Fred liked his meals on time.

Sometimes "the girls" spent the afternoons sewing at the home of one of them or calling on more distant acquaintances. They all lived in practically identical apartments, differing only as to a choice of wall paper, of fumed oak or highly polished mahogany for living rooms and of four-poster or brass beds in the sleeping chambers. Sometimes each "girl" spent the afternoon alone, but this was restricted, usually,

to rainy days or days too threatening to venture out. On those days, "the girls" spent their individual afternoons doing their less nice darning and sewing, washing garments too fragile to be trusted to the laundry or making batches of fudge, according to their individual needs and desires.

Ruth had a key to her sister's apartment, an extra key, made for Anna's mother-in-law, who lived in Canton, Ohio, and came up each Spring for a visit. Anna had given it to Ruth a few weeks before, so that Ruth might get a package in her absence. So, when her ring failed to bring response, Ruth did not need to summon the janitor in order to gain admission. She thought that perhaps her sister had gone out earlier and left a note for her on the table.

Ruth opened the door with the key, which had lain next to her own in her purse, and went in. The living room was in its usual condition, fairly neat, stiffly arranged, dusty in the corners. The mahogany "set" of three pieces, green velour upholstered, a gift from Fred two Christmases ago, the wicker chair with the broken arm, the oval center table with its rose-colored silk shade, which Anna had made with the help of "free instruction," given when you buy the materials at one of the department stores, all stood in their accustomed places. In the bed-room, the bird's-eye maple set looked as impudently clean as ever.

In the bath-room, Ruth found Anna. She screamed. Then she went closer and examined the body curiously, as if Anna were a stranger. Anna was fully dressed. She was wearing her new waist and her tan spats.

Ruth screamed again.

She got out into the hall.

A bill collector for an instalment furniture house was coming out of one of the other apartments and heard her. He went to find the janitor.

In less than five minutes a crowd had gathered. Two policemen were there, questioning everyone, writing in small notebooks with thick fingers and stubs of pencils and giving out sullen, inaccurate information.

Ruth gave her name and Anna's and Fred Carpenter's name and business address and told about finding the body. In half an hour Fred Carpenter was there, questioning, being questioned, sorrowful, melancholy, yet conscious of his importance.

The funeral was two days later. "The girls" all sent flowers and the spice firm employees sent a large wreath, bought from money collected by the bookkeeper, who always did such things. Everyone said Anna was well remembered and that it was a nice funeral.

After the funeral, Fred let Anna's two sisters, Ruth and Sophie, and his brother Phillip's wife take what they wanted of the household things, and sold the rest to a second-hand dealer, where they brought little enough, and he went to live with Phillip, who had a room for him, since his oldest son had gone into training.

Ever since she discovered the body, Ruth had tried to find out why Anna committed suicide. It was such a terrible thing to do—the worst thing you could do—just to end things—like that. How Anna must have suffered there, alone! Yet she never left a note or anything. Ruth couldn't quite understand it. She knew that she never could do away with herself. She was prettier than Anna had been, rather plump and blonde, with little, fine lines around her mouth and light eyes, which had been very blue when she was sixteen.

After a few days, when things began to settle down a little, and Ruth had become accustomed to thinking of Anna as being dead and no longer fell asleep meditating on getting black clothes or the awfulness of finding Anna in the bath-room, she began to reason out for herself why Anna had committed suicide. And, after a while, it came to her and she didn't blame Anna at all. In fact, she wondered why she herself didn't do it.

Anna had committed suicide, of course, because she had been in love.

Ruth knew now whom Anna had been in love with. Why hadn't she suspected it sooner? Of course, Anna was in love with Martin, the clerk at the Good Measure Grocery and Meat Market.

It was very plain to Ruth, as she thought about it. She remembered how, when the other girls suggested buying things at grocery departments of downtown department stores, Anna always said: "Oh, let's not do that, and carry all the bundles home on the subway." And, if anyone suggested having things sent, Anna always reminded them how long it took for deliveries—days sometimes—and downtown stores never would deliver fresh vegetables and fruits at all. "I like the little stores in my own neighborhood," Anna would add.

Ruth remembered that Anna had remarked, many times, on the beauty of the clerk Martin's eyelashes. They were beautiful—long and dark and heavy, and his eyes were an odd shape. Ruth remembered how Anna often lingered with Martin, after the others had given their orders and teased him about things or pretended to scold because she had not been given full measure. And Ruth remembered, too, how Anna always got the pick of everything.

Of course Martin—Ruth never even knew if that was his first or his last name—was the social inferior of their family. No one she knew had ever worked in a grocery store. But, even so, that couldn't keep Anna from being in love with him. Of course, there hadn't been anything between them. Ruth knew that. She had been with her sister every day and knew Anna was absolutely moral and all that, but, no doubt, it was the hopelessness of it—loving Martin and seeing only a glimpse of him every day and maybe even knowing that he didn't love her in return. It was quite too awful. And yet Ruth knew how Anna had felt.

For Ruth was in love too. If Anna had only confided in her, she could have confided in Anna. It just shows how little sisters really know one another.

Of course, Ruth knew that her love was far different from Anna's, far deeper and truer and more lasting. Though, at that, hadn't Anna's love lasted as long as she had? But, of course, there was a difference. For Ruth was in love with no mere grocer's clerk. She was in love with Towers Wellman, her husband's best friend.

Towers Wellman worked at the same haberdasher's shop as her husband even, but there the resemblance ended. For, while Dick was a nice little fellow, quite loving and attentive, he never quite understood things. His mind was wrapped up in collars and underwear sales. But Towers Wellman was a man of the world. He belonged to a bowling club and a political club and went to stag dinners. He was not married and he made jokes about matrimony.

Ruth knew three women who were hopelessly in love with him. Towers had told Ruth about the women himself. Dick would bring Towers home to dinner and Ruth would spend the whole afternoon preparing things he liked, and, in the evening, the three of them would attend a moving picture show, and sometimes, before she knew it, when there was a dark scene, Towers would be holding her hand.

Ruth thought of Towers the last thing before she went to bed at night, visualizing his dark, lean profile, his deep-set eyes, his black, waved hair. No wonder women, rich women, were in love with him. And yet, Ruth felt that he loved her alone. Frequently, half in fun, he told how he had broken an important social engagement to come to dinner, but Ruth knew that the look he gave her had a double meaning, for he *had* come to dinner, and there wasn't a reason in the world why some rich woman hadn't invited him first.

So—Anna had been in love too! And she had felt so badly over it that she had taken poison! Maybe the affair had gone further than Ruth suspected! Yet, how could it? Wasn't Fred home every evening and hadn't she seen Anna every day?

Ruth almost wished that she had the courage to kill herself, or something. It was mighty hard, living with one man and loving another one. And spending the days chatting about other things, never talking about what you want to talk about or getting near the one you care for. Never daring to tell anyone about things! Maybe, if she and Anna had confided in each other. . . . But, it was too late for that now. Anna had loved and found it hopeless, and gone out.

Ruth knew her love was hopeless too. For, though she loved Towers and felt that he loved her, she knew that he was too little to take her away with him. She loved him none the less for his prudence, for she was rather a coward and hated scandals and things like that herself. Anna's suicide was bad enough. The family would never quite recover from it. Oh, well, life was pretty messy after all. Here she had to keep on, day after day, and Towers was the only one she cared for. Nothing else, no one else mattered. If only Towers and she could go away some place, away from everyone and be happy together! And she never could do that, she knew. After all, hadn't Anna done the wiser thing?

III

SOPHIE missed her younger sister a great deal. The girls were orphans, their mother had died when Sophie was fourteen and their father three years later, and Sophie, though just a few years older, had really raised Anna.

The last years Sophie didn't see Ruth and Anna frequently, for Sophie had four children and children take time. Sophie's husband was a union tailor and was on strike a great deal and she couldn't dress well or have things as nice as the two younger girls. Not that she envied them, only—well, there wasn't much use feeling bad by trying to go with them anyhow. They had their own crowd and were younger and smarter and different. But fine girls, of course.

Sophie thought about Anna as she mended always-torn blouses and washed always-dirty dishes. Why had Anna done such a thing? After all the time she had spent raising her! It seemed as if Anna were only a little girl, instead of a woman of thirty-five. But even thirty-five is young when one has a lot to live for. Didn't Anna have? Sophie had always thought of her two younger sisters as rather happy and fortunate. Surely, Anna had always seemed happy. And yet . . .

What had made Anna hate the world enough to want to get out of it? She had a nice home, nicer than Sophie would ever have. There surely were no debts. Certainly they got along well enough together, Anna and Fred.

But did they?

People thought that she and Steve got along all right too. You can keep people from finding out things like that, if you're careful. Hadn't she done it? For years and years? And she probably would keep on, until the kids were grown up and then—oh, how could she get along any other way? It was more than a habit.

Still, Fred didn't drink. At least, at first, Sophie was pretty certain he didn't. You couldn't be too sure. People didn't all know about Steve.

Though Steve was working now, Sophie shuddered and walked quietly, as if he were asleep in the next room. For Steve got paid on Saturday, when he "worked steady," and on Saturday night he came in, his pay envelope pitifully depleted, smelling horribly of cheap whisky, and cursing. She'd pray the children wouldn't hear and she'd get him to bed.

In the morning he'd be sick and lay there saying things he shouldn't, though usually he'd be up and able to work on Monday. It wasn't that Steve drank more than most men. It was just that he was the sort who shouldn't drink at all. Even the doctor said he had a delicate stomach and couldn't stand it. But he did drink, though not so terribly often, like some men.

But even when Steve didn't drink,

things weren't so much better. He had a mean disposition, the kind that can take an innocent phrase and boomerang it into a sneer. He was never quite satisfied about things, about his home, about his children. He hated the Government and joined various political societies, getting into fights with the neighborhood leaders and hating them in turn. Steve wouldn't read several of the newspapers, because he "had it in for them" and their policies. He disliked Sophie's friends and her relatives, and quarreled because he had to spend the evening with them occasionally. He called Dick a "damned white-collared little snob" and Fred was a "sick roach who hadn't the liver to have a will of his own." Steve was not a pleasant person to live with.

Thinking over her life since her marriage and the life of Anna, since her marriage, as she knew it, little things came to Sophie which showed her that Fred was not all that Anna had tried to picture him. She saw, now, clearly enough, that Anna had been brave, that she had tried to conceal Fred's failings, but that, underneath, she hated him for his cruelty to her. Little things that Anna had said proved this. It could be nothing else.

Why hadn't Anna left Fred? Sophie felt that she would have left Steve years ago, if it hadn't been for the kids. Anna could have left—any day. Only herself to look out for and she had been a cashier before her marriage and could always have made a living. Still, maybe she did think of that way—and decided against it. Sophie felt that there was something noble, something brave, about what Anna had done. She wished she could do it. She wished it on Saturday night, when Steve was drinking and on many other nights when he wasn't. There wasn't so very much use in living, most of the time.

And yet—the kids. They were sweet. They had mean tempers sometimes, especially little Steve, who could be really bad. But then, again, sometimes when they were in bed, they'd let her put her arms around them, tight, some nights, and kiss her in return, too. They were sweet, the kids, and worth a lot of hard things.

But Anna hadn't any kids. Not a one. If the baby hadn't died, maybe she could have stood it, too. Still, what is the use of it all? You can't tell how kids'll turn out, even if you spend years sewing and cooking and cleaning for them. It's taking a chance. And the other things . . . it's best to get away from them.

Anna, without anyone but Fred, and he mean to her and she trying to conceal it with smiles and jokes and changing the subject . . . she had been brave. And one person can't stand everything. And, looking ahead and seeing nothing but years of Fred and his bad treatment or of working to try to make a living, maybe, after all, Anna had figured it out that her way was best. Fred had said they hadn't quarrelled. But then, Sophie never did trust Fred too much from the first. Of course, he'd have said that. They had probably had an awful quarrel the night before, and, rather than go through with it all again . . .

Well, Anna was dead. It must be good to simply quit and stop quarelling and working. If she had Anna's chance to go out, without harming anyone else, without leaving any kids for maybe worse treatment. . . . Sophie knew, in her heart, why Anna had committed suicide, and, though she shed many tears over her sister, understanding things as she did, she couldn't blame her. Maybe Anna had picked out the right path.

IV

After his wife's death, Fred Carpenter went to live with his brother Phillip and Phil's wife, Myrtle. Fred missed his wife a great deal, especially during the first few months after her death. A companionship of ten years—and as close a companionship as a married couple, living together in a city apartment, without children, are bound to have, is not easily forgotten.

But, in a few months, Fred grew

accustomed to life at Phil's house, which was not much different from his old life. It was the same social stratum. Fred enjoyed the company of his two little nephews and liked to bring small presents home to them when he came in early on Saturday afternoon. He got along quite well with Myrtle, a pleasant-faced, pale woman, who was glad of the extra money that Fred paid into the housekeeping fund.

Fred's share of the expenses, as proportioned by Phil, was much less than he had ever paid for the upkeep of his own apartment and he was able to begin saving money immediately after the funeral expenses were paid.

Often, when he was alone in his room, Fred thought of Anna and of her death.

At first he had been too startled, too numbed into silence to think that there had to be a reason for her suicide. It had seemed more like an accidental death, something that had taken Anna unawares as it had taken him. He and Anna had shared so many of their sensations that it seemed hard for Fred to believe that Anna had done this thing herself.

But, gradually, the unreality of the situation wore away and Fred came to know that Anna was really dead—and by her own hand. And, as he realized that she had killed herself, at the same time came the realization of the motive for it, the only possible motive. Anna had killed herself because she was poor! It had been under the burden of a continued poverty that must have eaten into her spirit as he had often felt it eat into his, that Anna had decided not to live any more. Anna had never said anything to Fred about it. He was surprised, now, that she never had—for he thought that she had told him everything. And yet, he had felt the same thing so often himself that he was not surprised to find that Anna had felt it and that it had been too much for her.

They had never really experienced the pangs of poverty, it is true. Fred felt that it would have been easier to bear if they had. He had always "done well," in that he had made a living. Each month, by hurrying around to dozens of little, retail groceries, he had sold enough spices to maintain his simple household.

But each month there had been the fear that, perhaps, there wouldn't be enough for the month to come.

Each month some household article had advanced in price and had to be purchased less frequently or not at all. If he and Anna went to the theater—balcony seats—there could be no other luxuries that week or the week that followed. Even a guest in to dinner—and the Carpenters had little company—made a difference in the household money. New shoes were to be talked over, several weeks ahead, at the dinner table. A new suit meant that they had to start saving for it a month or two in advance, and, if one made a mistake and bought the wrong suit, which happened quite often enough, the suit had to be worn just the same, throughout the season. Fred had to look neat all the time. And Anna had a certain position to uphold too. She had to prove to "the girls" and to the rest of her small world, that she was the wife of a prosperous city salesman.

Anna was not extravagant, Fred knew that. He could picture her, brow-knitted, looking over small household bills, trying to find which could be reduced without radically altering a fairly comfortable manner of living. Anna cleaned her own gloves and her own thin waists. Outside of a few ice cream soda "treats" for "the girls" she spent little money foolishly.

Fred knew that Anna had always been a true wife to him. He knew that he was the only man she had ever cared about and that she had cared for him sincerely and devotedly. He knew that there could have been no other trouble. He knew only too well why Anna died.

Fred had felt like that—himself. He and Anna must have lain on the same bird's-eye maple bed and thought the same things about living. Only, Anna

had ended it and he had kept on.

He hadn't wanted Anna to work. He didn't believe that married women ought to have positions. A woman's place is in the home, he always maintained, and a position for Anna, as a possible way out of their poverty, had never entered his mind.

But, how often he had wished for money, for some of the smaller, cheaper luxuries! He had often gone to sleep wondering how many years more he could keep up the strain of spice-selling, the constant hammering of it, the continued striving to make a living. Always, in the end, he felt himself beaten, saw himself, before he had reached old age, being overtaken by real poverty, finding that he was unable to sell enough spices to support himself and Anna. There was nothing else he could do as well. He knew that. Selling, selling, day after day, just for the privilege of living in a little, stuffy apartment and never enough left over to put some by. No wonder the outlook had been too much for Anna. He hadn't known that she had felt deeply about it—or cared. And she had cared, so very much.

Now that Anna was dead, things were different. Fred wondered if Anna ever looked down from Up There and saw that her sacrifice had not been in vain. The burden of supporting two was lifted. He paid Myrtle each week, bought things for the boys and little extras for himself that he never could have afforded before—a more expensive brand of cigarette, a new cane, some collars of an odd shape, and each week he put a little money into a savings account.

Fred felt years younger. He was preparing for old age. There was something to look ahead to. But—to have kept on the other way . . . trudging always to a poorer future. . . . It had been mighty black. Too black, sometimes. Fred had considered, often enough, the very thing that Anna had done. He had been insured for three thousand dollars, in her name, and he felt that her sisters would both rather look out for her—they had good homes—and she could have stayed with them and gone to work at an easy job, if necessary. It seemed such a cowardly thing to do—to step from under, and he had never quite got to it, after all. And now—he was free.

But Anna—wasn't she free, too? Hadn't she taken the way out, as she saw it, a way that meant no more scraping and saving, no more using up of left-overs, or planning for new bargain shoes three weeks before the soles ran through the old ones? It was sad enough, losing Anna, but when he thought it over, Fred understood perfectly. It was the simplest solution. He didn't blame Anna at all. Compared to living on, doing without nice things, planning to keep on doing without them, and, with the strain drawing tighter and tighter, Anna had certainly chosen the better way.

V

On the morning that she committed suicide, Anna Carpenter waked up at seven. The round nickeled clock on the bird's-eye maple dresser awoke her as usual. She yawned and stretched her arms above her head as she did every morning. Then she nudged Fred, sleeping rather noisily with his mouth not quite tightly closed, as he always slept. Then, as she never missed doing, Anna got up and shut off the alarm, went into the bathroom, hung up the towels that Fred had thrown on the floor the night before, and took a hurried bath. She put on her "morning clothes" that hung in the disorderly, tightly-crowded closet. They differed from her "best clothes" in that the cheap lace edging of the underthings was badly worn, and that, instead of a dark skirt and a lace waist—her usual afternoon outfit—Anna wore a checked gingham dress. Anna had three morning dresses. Two were blue and white and one pink and white. The pink and white one was slightly faded. By wearing aprons over them, when she cooked, one dress looked plenty clean enough

to wear mornings, and when she got dinner, for a whole week.

After she had bathed, Anna went back into the bedroom to dress and again waked Fred, who always fell asleep after the first waking. This time, Anna talked to him about what had happened to both of them the day before. She had been with Ruth to call on Mrs. Ambier, an old friend, who had just had her third baby at a neighborhood hospital.

"She doesn't look strong," Anna said. "She ought not to have any more children."

Fred didn't remember whether or not Mrs. Ambier had looked strong the last time he had seen her—for several months, Mrs. Ambier had not performed her accustomed social duties—but agreed that, if she looked badly, there should be no more children.

Fred told Anna about old Klingman, one of his regular customers, and how he made him taste the pickled herring and other Klingman-prepared specialties.

"He's quite a character," Fred added.

While Fred shaved, Anna got breakfast. It was the usual breakfast. There was half of a large orange for each. When oranges were smaller, Fred and Anna each had a whole one, but grapefruit and large oranges were always divided. Then there was oatmeal, cooked the night before and left standing, wrapped in a towel, on the radiator all night. It's just as good that way, Anna always told her friends, as if prepared in a fireless cooker—and a great deal less trouble. There were two soft-boiled eggs apiece—on alternate mornings the eggs were scrambled—but today was the day to soft-boil them.

Some mornings there was toast, but this morning the bread was soft enough to be eaten without toasting—and coffee. Before puttings the eggs in water Anna went to see how far Fred had progressed with his dressing. He was putting his shirt on, which meant that Anna would have to hurry things a little—as she always did towards the end.

Breakfast was at eight-thirty. Before sitting down, Fred got the paper, which the boy had left at the door, and read it as he ate. He was not too absorbed in the news to listen to what Anna had to say nor pass morsels of the last twelve hours' happenings to her.

After eating, Fred looked at his watch, a $2.50 Ingersoll, which kept just as good time for him as a gold one that he had had given to him when he was twenty-one, and found that he was a trifle late. He tried to be at the office at nine-thirty, starting from there on his rounds of spice-selling, after dictating a few business letters and handing in reports that he had not attended to the night before.

As usual, Fred was a trifle late. He folded his paper irregularly and thrust it into his overcoat pocket. It was early in the fall and slightly cool. He kissed Anna good-bye a bit hurriedly, as usual, but he remembered later that the kiss she gave him in response was no warmer, no colder, for that matter, than the kiss she usually gave him. It was the last time Fred saw Anna alive.

After Fred left, Anna gathered together the breakfast dishes and washed them in the sink, without a dishpan. She preferred this method because it was quicker. The water was not very warm. It scarcely ever was warm enough to wash dishes properly and she frequently spoke to the janitor about it. With the use of a cleaning powder, she got the dishes fairly clean and dried them slowly.

After putting the dishes away, Anna made the one bed. Then, with a carpet sweeper which needed oiling and squeaked badly she went over the brightly colored rugs in the living and dining rooms. She did the bedroom on alternate days. She dusted the furniture with an irregularly shaped piece of cloth, the tail of one of Fred's old shirts.

A package she had ordered the day before came up the dumbwaiter. Anna opened it. It was a bargain shirtwaist and she noticed that one of the sleeves was sewed in crooked. She took it into the bedroom, glanced at the clock and saw that it was nearly ten-thirty.

Anna tried on the shirtwaist. It fitted well enough, except where the sleeve was wrong. She could wear it that afternon and fix it—in half an hour—some other time. The collar was rather nice.

She picked up a woman's magazine—she had subscribed to it and two more a few months before, "to help a boy through college"—and read two stories in it. The second story was quite pathetic and she wiped her eyes at the ending.

She looked over the back of the magazine at the cooking recipes and found a simple recipe for spice cakes with one egg. She found she had all the ingredients in the house and Fred and she both liked spice cakes. She went back into the kitchen, propped the magazine against the built-in cabinet, using a yellow mixing bowl, and made the cakes, following the recipe carefully, humming a little to herself as she cooked. Anna was not especially fond of cooking. She had been housekeeping for ten years.

While the little cakes were baking—she had poured the batter into muffin tins, she read some more of the magazine. When the cakes were done, she spread them on a clean towel, and, as soon as they were cool enough, bit into one. It was quite good. If the cakes had failed, those who wondered about her suicide might have found the spice cakes and considered them as a motive. But the cakes were so good Anna ate two of them. She put the others into the cake box alone with a stale piece of baker's cake, left over from three days before, gathered up the crumbs, washed the dishes her baking had soiled and went into the bedroom. It was eleven-fifteen.

She washed and started to change into her "afternoon clothes," choosing the new waist that Ruth found her in. The 'phone rang just before she finished dressing. It was Marie Cluens, one of "the girls," asking her to come over in the afternoon. Marie was expecting a few other callers. Anna said that Ruth was coming for her and if Ruth had made no other plans she'd be glad to go.

She was all dressed, and looked at herself in the bird's-eye maple dresser mirror. She approved of her looks, for, at thirty-five, it is quite all right to have a few wrinkles and a sprinkling of grey hair. Most women of thirty-five looked older.

Then Anna remembered that she had neglected to put on her spats. She had bought some tan ones, a few weeks before, while shopping with Ruth, who had bought grey. Spats are awkward things to button, after one is dressed, when one hasn't a maid, and Anna had taken on a few extra pounds recently. She finally managed to button them. Then, suddenly, button-hook still in her hand, after she had finished buttoning her spats, Anna sat upright on the bird's-eye maple chair and thought, for the first time in months, about herself.

Here she was—buttoning spats! She hated to button them. What a bore, what a terrible bore it was, to button them! And, tonight, she would have to unbutton them, and, tomorrow afternoon, she would have to take spots out of them, if there were any spots, and button them again.

And it wasn't only spats. It was other things. Anna thought of all of the other pieces of clothes she wore, her vest, copied after its more expensive Italian silk sisters, her "Teddy-bears," the delicate and modest name "the girls" had taken to calling their combinations, then corsets, stockings, camisole, skirt—every garment requiring buttoning or fastening or tying or pinning. Each one had to be pulled in place or puffed or tied. And, in the evening, each one had to be taken off again.

Anna thought of how, each morning, she had to go through the same process of bathing and putting on a number of things. Then, she had to get breakfast and wash the dishes. Then she had to clean and do some washing, usually those same underneaths, and then dress again. And then go out and then come home and cook dinner—and eat it—and

then wash more dishes and then spend an evening at something tiresome—and then undress again. Life stretched out before Anna—a void of little things—punctuated only by dressing and undressing.

The worst of it was, after she was dressed, there was nothing to do. There is some object in dressing if one has an appointment, a little secret meeting, a half hour's flirtation, a dinner, the meeting of new people, adventure, anything. Then, indeed, may one dress without heeding the buttons. But Anna knew that there were no surprises in her day—that there never could be—that nothing could come that would be pleasurable enough to make up for the thousand unbuttonings.

Sitting there, button-hook held taut in her right hand, Anna went over her life, as it drifted back to her. First, years of school, slow, stupid years, of little quarrels with playmates, little misunderstandings with her teachers, lessons at night at a round table, with Sophie and Ruth, occasionally, very dull parties on Friday evenings. Then, the death of her parents. Then, school days were over and the dull years stretched into long days of working and long evenings with "the boys" and "the girls." "The boys" were the masculine set, who, attracted by "the girls," took them to possible social diversions. Fred had been one of "the boys." Three years of a dull monotone of a courtship and she and Fred were married and the years had gone on—and she had dressed each morning for a day of colorless calm and undressed in the evening to get rest for another.

All things had come to Anna, and yet nothing had come. School, courtship, marriage, and then, after two years, a baby, a sickly, crying baby, who had taken all of her time from useless things to the doing of little, constantly repeated things for him. And then, after a year of the baby, he had died and she and Fred had decided they did not want another. Mourning, then, calm, placid. And then two years of absolute blankness.

Then, Anna had had an admirer. It had seemed the one experience that her grey life had missed, the one thing that might have some significance. Her admirer had been the family dentist, a ruddy fellow, getting bald too young. In the unpicturesque pose of being open-mouthed in a dentist chair she had fallen in love with him and he had seemingly reciprocated her affection.

Anna's passion had been brief, shallow. There had been a number of pseudo-appointments, which had been given over to lovemaking.

Then the dentist, his first name was Harvey, had called during the mornings, when Anna knew "the girls" weren't likely to come in. Harvey had stayed for lunch, and, as that was the one meal of the day which Anna did not usually have to prepare, she rebelled at having to cook it for her lover, who had a large appetite. After only the smallest glimmer of pleasurable excitement, Harvey had dimmed into the monotony of her regular life, his visits, the lunches for him, the fear of being discovered with her lover had gradually blotched into the background.

And, as unexcitedly as he had drifted in, Harvey, perhaps finding Anna as monotonous as she found him, perhaps because a prettier patient appeared, drifted out.

Anna did not grieve for him. Occasionally she shuddered at the thought of what might have happened if Fred or Ruth had discovered the affair, but even the shudders grew to lack distinction.

After Harvey, Anna had had no more lovers. Now, thinking about it, Anna found that she had not talked, seriously, to a man alone, for over three years. There was no one she was interested in, no one she knew or cared to know whom being alone with was worth the effort of planning for it. She knew so few men. There was a stupid grocer's clerk with long lashes, a drug clerk who simpered at her and a friend of Fred's, who held her hand when he told her good night—and they all lacked sex interest.

Anna knew that Ruth was having a silly affair with a friend of Dick's, but it didn't bother her. It didn't interest her enough to make her wish that Ruth would get confidential about it. She had had her affair. She knew what a bore affairs were.

Anna had hoped, when she was younger, that she might have a real lover, a great passion, but, as the years passed, and she saw her youth slipping away, saw that her social position was not one to attract men and that she had no special gift of attraction, anyhow, she almost forgot about it.

She thought of Fred, pleasantly. Fred was good, awfully good and awfully, awfully tiresome. There hadn't been a surprise in anything that Fred had done in five years. Anna knew that he never could do anything but calm, expected things. Fred had always been kind to her. How different from Sophie's husband, who was such a terror. Poor Sophie! She tried so hard, always, to conceal things. Well, there was nothing she could do to help her, so she had never spoken to Sophie about it, let her believe that no one knew what a brute Steve was. Anna knew she wouldn't have stood him a week.

Anna thought of other things, of money. She knew Fred worried quite a lot about it. She would have liked to have money, too, of course, but, as long as Fred made a good living, and she felt he always would do that, the question of finances did not greatly concern her. She would have liked to have been rich, but, after all, they were poor people and she had been brought up modestly.

She still sat, button-hook in hand. And she loked at the button-hook—and at her spats—and thought of the thousands of other buttons that would have to be attended to, on thousands of succeeding days. What was the use of it all, anyhow? Why keep on? Why bother? She really wasn't interested in living, in anything. Why, there was a way out, a way that meant no buttons at all!

Anna felt, suddenly, that she couldn't stand it another day. The years that stretched out—the years of getting old, monotonously, of hundreds of calls on and from "the girls," thousands of moving pictures with Fred, thousands of dishes, thousands of—buttons. She couldn't stand it! Anything else!

She threw the button-hook on the floor. It hit the mahogany door, which she rubbed down so carefully, every week, so it would retain its shine. And Anna smiled. She could get out of polishing that door! It had never occurred to her before. It had never entered her mind that she washed dishes and talked to Fred and buttoned and unbuttoned because she wanted to—because she chose that way. There was another way, after all, a way that might hold something else or nothing else at the end, but that, at least, would end, for always, the things that kept on, unbearable, now.

She went into the bathroom. From the top shelf of the medicine chest she took a large blue bottle. On the label it was marked "Poison" in large, black letters. It was an excellent germicide.

Anna tasted it. It rather burnt her lips a little and was decidedly unpleasant. But—after all—it would taste unpleasant for only a few minutes. And then it would all be over—everything would be over.

It seemed a miracle that things could be ended thus, slightly. One drink and dirty dishes, bedmaking, dressing and undressing would cease to be. Fred would cease to be—for her. There would be no need of trying to appear interested when he was talking to her, of trying to say things that would interest him. No dinners to plan or cook. Nothing to have to waste time over! No time that needed wasting! And she had never thought of it before! Anna looked at her tan spats. They were buttoned—and would stay that way—until some other hands than hers unbuttoned them. If it hadn't been for the spats, now, for that last straw of additional buttons . . .

Anna poured the poison into a glass

—she never liked to drink things out of a bottle, and tasted it again. Then she remembered what she was doing, and smiled. It seemed unbelievable that there could be such an easy solution. She drank the glassful.

Ruth, coming in, later in the afternoon, with the extra key, found her.

HOW TO BECOME A MILLIONAIRE AT THIRTY

By Harry A. Earnshaw

BE honest. Be punctual. Be industrious. Be loyal. Be thorough. Rise early. Don't drink. Keep your boots polished. Save your money.

When you arrive at the age of thirty, marry a woman who has a million dollars.

REVERIE

By David Morton

DREAMING romances by the open fire:
Lost loves and wars, and faces that were fair,
I knew the heat of all that sweet desire,
The leap of blood that led brave men to dare.
Across the crowded centuries they came,
Breathed from old tombs in many a mystic place,
The spell that clung about a spoken name,
The waking dream and wonder at a face.

Mine was the throat-ache of an old distress,
I knew the warmth a lover's whisper bore. . . .
Then . . . suddenly . . . the rustle of your dress:
I turned and saw you standing at the door.
Dreams of old dreams, and faces that were fair
Faded like ghosts along your cloudy hair.

THE symptoms of reasoning in a woman are not very much different from the symptoms of ptomaine poisoning.

MARRIAGE is the most expensive way of dying.

A VULGAR AFFAIR ON THE HAPPY ROAD

By Herbert W. Seaman

I

THERE was once a young man of Wisconsin, an earnest community betterment worker, who, in the hope of banishing from the world a state of mind that had existed since before Babylon, made a book from the harrowing narrative that fell from the lips of a sophisticated and accomplished *entremetteuse* as he plied her with wine.

"Plied her with wine" were his very words.

The book had an immense sale, largely due, I believe to a chastely designed cover, whereon the agonized faces of a number of maidens peering through iron bars were used to good effect upon a background of gamboge flames. The title was, I think (for I hurled the book over Brooklyn Bridge), "The Claws of the Tiger."

II

IT is curious that what happened to me on a summer evening in England five or six years ago should now become suddenly new and vivid. It made so little impression at the time that I cannot now name the year. I only remember that it was the summer when every band in every pier pavilion, *kursaal* and park in England and on the Continent played "In the Shadows" and "Valse Septembre" in every programme. The omission would have caused a riot.

Painting in the early summer in the Lake district, I heard the bands on the Windermere pleasure boats blaring out those tunes; later, in the Norfolk Broads, where I hid for two months, I heard them still from gramaphones on houseboats and wherries; in late summer, when I had returned to London, I heard them at Earl's Court, the Crystal Palace, Shepherd's Bush—everywhere.

One does not necessarily frequent Earl's Court, the Crystal Palace and Shepherd's Bush. I did it with an object. I went out with the deliberate intention of enjoying what H. G. Wells and W. L. George may claim as the greatest literary discovery of the age. Wells calls it the Monkey parade, and eulogizes it. W. L. George tells how he, on his arrival in England, found himself in the midst of it. I enjoyed it for many weeks, and from it I learned much about people.

I learned, for instance, that all London is divided into two classes, and the word "palace" is the rock on which they split. To half London "the palace" is that barrack-like structure in the West End, with stiff lifeguards at the gates. To the other half "the palace" is the great glass fairyland at Sydenham, where there is an organ greater than all the picture show pipe organs in London, and where one may be King for a shilling.

I learned, too, that the weary little shop-girl who reads "Molly the Marchioness" with her coffee and buns at the A. B. C. restaurants, and the wearier little "general" who reads "From Mill to Mansion" on her evenings off, cherish no illusions about these things. The English shop-girl is as

different from her American prototype as both are from the ladies of Mayfair and Fifth Avenue. For while the American shop-girl picks out in the street the type of electric limousine she is going to own some day, and even selects the material for her chauffeur's uniform, her English sister bothers not her head about the difference between a Rolls-Royce and an Austin.

On summer evenings in England "the spirit that lights the glowworm and the evening star, and calls the moth abroad," brings out into the parks and open spaces and along certain streets crowds of common little girls from the big drapers' shops, and common little boys from the warehouses. The Monkey parade is vulgar, of course; as vulgar as eating and drinking, and dancing, and taking fermented wine with one's meals, and the Song of Solomon, and the Atlantic Ocean. But what is a girl to do when she sets out to cram as much romance as possible into that very short span of years between "going out to work" and being caged up in a tenement with babies?

If kisses were as free as handshakes they would be no more thrilling, a friend once told me. He was a cynic. On the Monkey parade kisses are as free as air and as sweet as summer breezes.

A young doctor named Conway introduced me to all this. I think he had made the discovery only a short time before, for he spoke of it as a phenomenon, as one speaks of the Mennonites. He was out of temper with people who called it the Monkey parade. He called it "The Happy Road." Soon I found both names fitted it. I learned the rules of the joyous game, and played it.

All this explanation is necessary before I begin to tell you of Ethel Catton, in order to make my position clear. I feel rather rotten about it all, but I believe my story will justify my conduct. I want those who know only one side of it to learn all that happened.

So I met a girl on the Happy Road one night. She was a charming little thing, fair. She told me her name was Ethel Catton. I did not believe her; under the circumstances one gives wrong names as a matter of course. Romance builds on unreality, when one has spent all day behind a counter.

It was quite early in the evening, and the band was playing "In the Shadows." When I proposed a row on the river she agreed at once. I hope it is quite clear that this was a perfectly natural thing for her to do. The spirit of the Happy Road is so free from any suggestion of harm that no London girl would think of refusing the invitation. I think some intuition or other defends these girls, for certainly they are never consciously on their guard. And the river, at any rate, was almost as crowded as the street at that hour.

We climbed to the top of a tram, and I knew one reason why London shop-girls are not interested in motor cars. Before I realized it we were at the boathouse.

It was a warm evening and I rowed slowly. As we went we discussed musical comedies. There was "Peggy" at the Gaiety, and "The Chocolate Soldier" at the Lyric, and (it seems like ancient history) I think "The Arcadians" was still at the Shaftsbury. She sang "Bring Me a Rose," and I found it charming.

The river, a narrow backwater bounded by a mill three miles from the boathouses, was crowded with hired boats. Somebody had a mandoline half a mile away, and its vulgar tinkle was pleasing. Soon we came to an inn, "The White Horse," a fine old place, where they still used the wide window sill as a bar and handed out mugs of beer to yokels on the dusty road. We sat on the green, where there were benches and swings and a chorus of yelling cockneys. The mandoline came nearer, and swelled the chorus. "If those lips could only speak" I think it was. It is as dead now as "Champagne Charley."

"Really, I must ask you again to see my position, and to refrain from applying to it a moral code that does not ex-

ist. I wish it to be understood finally that she was acting quite properly—indeed, gracefully—when she asked for port wine. She said she had never had port. Whether that was true or not, I am certain that she had never had Martinez 1844, at fifteen shillings a bottle, and that is what I ordered. She drank only one glass, sipping it very slowly. We talked, and I learned more about her. We were friends now. She had no hesitation in telling me where she lived and where she worked, and who she was.

She "lived in" at a big dry goods store in North Kensington. Her parents lived at St. Albans, where her father was a gardener. She had a brother who worked in a warehouse in St. Paul's churchyard, and he was learning the trade to go on the road some day.

And then she asked me if I had read Charles Garvice's latest. I ought to have seen at once that there was something wrong, because naturally she had asked me when we first met if I had read Charles Garvice's latest. Every shop-girl in England—and for the matter of that, every chorus girl, and every female inmate of every country vicarage—read Charles Garvice that year. I believe they are still reading him, despite the war. He wrote faster than England could read; faster than Laura Jean Libby.

The terraced green that fronted on the river was a dream garden that night. Colored fairy lamps hung among the trees. A great harvest moon glowed red across the fields. We talked a long time, and neither was bored.

I was as surprised as she when we woke to realize that the moon had gone, the river was dark and almost deserted, and the mandoline was far away, nearly out of airshot.

She sprang to her feet suddenly.

"We must get back," she cried. "They lock us out at eleven."

So we got into the boat again, and I began to row back, pulling as hard as I dared in the darkness. For half a mile there was silence, except for ripple of the water at out bow and the rhythmical tug and squeak of the rowlocks. I slowed down a little when we came to a dark reach in the river, and then I noticed that my erstwhile vivacious companion was strangely silent, and was steering badly or not at all. Twice we narrowly missed the bank.

I called her by name.

There was no answer. I rested on the oars and, leaning over, peered into her face.

She was asleep.

"This will not do," I told myself, and I shook her gently.

She merely moaned and turned over. I shook her more roughly, but she made no sound, nor did she open her eyes.

Then I realized the awkwardness of the position. Here was I alone in a boat on a dark and deserted backwater, three miles from home, with a pretty innocent who had to be home at eleven, but insisted on sleeping and could not be induced to open her eyes.

It did not strike me then that the situation was at all dangerous, however. I was philosopher enough to smile at it. Obviously it was no use rowing fast; to arrive at the boat-house with the sleeping girl would have caused worse than gossip.

So when I came to a quiet bend where the willows overhung the water I drew in to the shore and tied up the boat.

I put my jacket over the girl, lit my pipe, and let her sleep, praying the while that her dormitory mistress was not a stickler for the eleven o'clock rule. For it was after ten.

I must have spent half an hour thus. She opened her eyes once or twice and moaned, and each time I tried to speak to her. I could make head nor tail of her disjointed replies. A night-jay in a tree across the stream peered at me.

With so much time for thinking, it was natural that the idea should come "What if she never wakes?" I dismissed the thought as absurd, filled my pipe again and registered a vow against the Monkey parade. It was an easy vow to make, for I had already

booked my passage on a liner leaving Liverpool three days later.

At last there was nothing for it but to row back. We were less than a mile from the boat-house now, with only half an hour's ride in a taxi to the shop where she lived. I pulled hard, but I had to steer with the oars, and could make but little speed on that zig-zag course.

Not until we were within sight of the boat-house lights did she stir and open her eyes again. She sat up quickly, looked around and said "Oh." I called to her, but she made no reply. Nor did she touch the rudder lines. She lay there among the cushions and stared at me, like a frightened rabbit.

Arrived at the boat-house, I helped her to land. She stumbled, but kept her feet. The boatman stared at us, but said nothing but "Goodnight, sir," as he touched his cap. I had to lead the girl up the path to the street, for I am sure she would have fallen without my help. I was very gentle.

Fortunately there was a taxi handy, for a river garden was nearby, and the pierrots were just shutting up for the night and the fairy lamps were blinking out. I suppose Ethel had never ridden in a taxicab before, but she showed no enthusiasm; no interest, even. She appeared to be dazed. She did not speak as we sped along, but I noticed that she did not sleep again.

We pulled up at the sidewalk in front of the store, and I got out.

She was past me like a flash. I had no time even to say "Good-bye." She had vanished down an alley at the side of the shop. There was nothing for me but to go back to Bloomsbury and pack.

III

But that is not the end of the story, and this is where the young man from Wisconsin comes in.

Only a few weeks ago I was in London again, and, at the invitation of Conway, the young doctor who had introduced me to the Happy Road, I paid a visit to a big military hospital in North Hampstead. I found my friend much changed. I asked him whether or not the Monkey parade still flourished as an institution.

"The streets aren't lighted," he replied; "but I don't suppose that makes any difference. The war itself cannot put out the light that calls them abroad in the evening. I haven't had time since August, 1914, to do any exploring, but, though everything else may be changed, I am sure the Happy Road is not. Only some of them are not shop girls any longer, and the boys are no longer warehouse boys. And some of them are dead, and some are married; but at bottom it is the same now as it was then. I suppose they now hum the songs from 'Bric-a-brac' and 'Razzle-Dazzle,' instead of 'In the Shadows' and 'Valse Septembre'."

He took me out into the garden where khaki-clad convalescents passed their time. We came to a group of soldiers sitting on a bench under a tree. A face among them was very familiar, somehow. I saw the doctor nod and smile as he passed this soldier.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"His name," said Conway, "is Catton. He has a sister in this hospital. She is a nurse. He told me a story about her one day, and I think I am betraying no confidence if I tell it to you, because you will understand.

"It appears that Ethel Catton met some scoundrel one night in the park, and he told her he was from America, and she went up the river with him. When they got as far as 'The White Horse'—it is a vulgar little inn; you wouldn't know it—he induced her to drink some concoction or other. It must have contained a drug. Immediately after drinking it she went to sleep, and when she awoke she was at the bottom of the steps leading to her dormitory. It seems rotten that such scoundrels should be abroad. It is an abuse of confidence and faith; if the Monkey parade, like its Mayfair equivalent, were a game played according to strict rules, one might be justified in breaking the rules.

"I have an ulterior motive in telling you this story."

I started!

"Yes," he replied. "I want to see if you like what I am going to do—if you really understand the spirit of the Happy Road. Tomorrow I am going to ask her to be my wife."

He said this triumphantly. I grasped his hand.

"Do you think I am doing right?" he asked.

"By George, yes," I almost shouted.

* * * * *

I never met Conway's fiancée. I had a perfectly fearful half-hour while he tried to telephone to her to make arrangements for a meeting. He failed, and I had to catch a train for Southampton. They are married now; and last week I received a letter from him, with a postscript from her: "I like to say hello to my husband's good friends. He often talks of you. I should like to have met you when you were in London."

One of these days I shall write a letter to them and explain everything. I have tried several times this week. It is going to be very difficult.

AUTUMN IN THE SUBWAY

By J. Thorne Smith, Jr.

I WATCHED her eyes, for they were fixed afar
Where sky and crag and flaring sunset meet,
And there before me in the fetid car
A river glided and the woods smelled sweet
And wind swam in the trees. The night came on
And through the singing dusk I saw her face
In Autumn foliage framed. Then she was gone.
A dark-eyed woman sank into her place.
Her heavy perfume drifting up to me
Swept out the night wind through the sobbing trees,
A shadow crossed the woods and stealthily,
There came to swift caress of silken knees.
Then beauty died. I sought another strap
And thought of one with red leaves in her lap.

IN every cynic's life there is one woman exempt from his shafts; just as every Magdalen exempts one man in her repentance.

A COQUETTE is a woman who puddles in your heart with the bare toes of her mockery.

TO a woman wedding-bells are reveille; to a man, curfew.

THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

By A. H. Folwell

First Episode

WHEN Clive J. Upham got home that evening, his wife had something to say to him. It was not unimportant.

"Clive," she said, getting right down to the subject at hand; "Clive, the grocer wants his money."

"Yes?" remarked Upham, quite unmoved, his eyebrows only slightly elevated.

"Yes. And so do the butcher and the baker and one or two other tradesmen."

"Well," queried the husband calmly, "there's nothing new in that, is there? Grocers, butchers and bakers usually do want money. That's their normal state."

"But," Mrs. Upham continued, "something simply must be done. I can't put them off any longer; positively, I'm ashamed to try. We'll have to pay them something, if only a little on account. If we don't, they'll stop our credit, that's all."

Mr. Upham whistled in a minor key.

"Is it as bad as all that?" he asked. "They didn't say anything, did they?"

"Yes, they did; that's just the point. They were very nice about it, but they did. They said they had to meet their bills promptly at the market, and people ought to—"

"Oh, I know. It's the old story. If people don't pay them, they'll bust. Long as they think you're prosperous, you can hang 'em up as'long as you like. They'll fight for the privilege of giving you credit. Did you casually mention that we were thinking of buying a car?" he asked his wife.

"I've done that until I'm ashamed of myself. I've done it for three months, raising the car from a runabout to a seven-passenger touring, and it doesn't work any more."

"How about our proposed tour of the West, to the National Parks and the Coast? Did you try that on 'em? That ought to quiet them and make them feel sure of their money."

"It used to, perhaps; but they've heard it too often. It was our tour of Europe before the war, you remember. Just now a little real money would do more to convince them than a whole stable full of automobiles or ten trips to the West. You ought to face them every day, the way I have to. Then you'd see. It simply can't go on; something will have to be done."

"Oh, you take it too seriously," soothed Upham, "but we'll see. Money is terribly tight with me just now, as you know, but I'll try to pay them something in a day or two. And don't worry so. The trouble with you is that you don't know how to handle these people. When you owe a tradesman two or three hundred dollars and he asks you for his money, you should threaten to take your trade elsewhere. Be insulted. That's the way to do it. That brings 'em around."

Second Episode

To speak in her own language, Mrs. Clive J. Upham was all worked up. Mr. Upham had just reached home. It was the afternoon following, and she had 'phoned to the office for him.

"Did they get much?" he inquired, as he looked wildly about the apartment.

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know,"

cried Mrs. Upham. "I haven't had the courage to look carefully. But just see what a mess they made of everything. I got home and found the door open—jimmie, evidently—and all my bureau drawers and closets turned inside out and the things all over the floor. They got my silver, of course, and my—oh, I can't tell what they got! But it's awful! I just knew we'd be robbed some day."

"Did you notify the police?" Mr. Upham asked practically.

"Of course I didn't. Somehow, I couldn't think of anything. The whole thing upset me so."

Mr. Upham walked to the telephone and reported the burglary to headquarters, and then, with the aid of his wife, took account of stock. The burglar, with the exception of table silver, had not made much of a haul. He had overlooked, in his haste, quite a few possibilities, and Mrs. Upham began to breathe again.

"Let me do the talking to the police," her husband cautioned; "you keep out of the way, and don't express astonishment at anything you hear. I've a happy thought."

When the precinct detectives arrived, Mr. Upham was convincingly excited.

"Did they get *much?*" he said, repeating the query of the plain-clothes man. "Well, I should say they did. They got all of my wife's diamonds, her rings, her sunburst and a pendant. They got several stickpins of mine, with a diamond or two, and six rubies. They got all my rings, except those I have on, of course, and they made off with a lot of other jewelry as well, a necklace and some bracelets belonging to my wife and some very fine pearls. My wife doesn't care a great deal for jewelry, so she seldom wears any but the simplest. It was rank carelessness, I suppose, not to have the stuff in a safe deposit box, along with my bonds and stock certificates, but there's no use crying over spilled milk. It's too late for that now."

Just the same, Mr. Upham was very much agitated.

So was his wife, who was listening at the door of a bedroom down the apartment hall.

Mr. Upham gave the detectives a description of the missing articles, a description that did him credit, so graphic was it, and minute in detail.

Of course, he had to put a value on the stuff; but he was very conservative about that; it totalled to not more than $10,000.

Unfortunately, he said, for the prospect of identification and recovery, none of the jewelry, so far as he could remember, bore any distinguishing marks.

And was there a "story" in the newspapers? There was. It began thus:

> Some time yesterday afternoon, thieves made a rich haul of jewelry at the home of Clive J. Upham, 444 Sixth Place. They jimmied the door of the apartment in Mrs. Upham's absence and made away, it is conservatively estimated, with about $20,000 worth of diamonds and other precious stones in pins, rings and necklaces. The burglars, so far as the police could ascertain, left no clue to their identity, although the detectives of the Sixth Hundredth Precinct, who are working on the case, declare that . . .

It made a good story, a very readable story, indeed, and it contained a brief interview with Mr. Upham, who considerately revised the list of lost articles for publication. He was also careful to state to the police reporters that his wife seldom wore jewelry, and that he supposed the loss served him right, because he hadn't put the stuff in a safe deposit vault.

Third Episode

"I stopped in to tell you," said Mrs. Upham next day to the grocer, "that I shall be sure to pay you something on our account this week. Mr. Upham says—"

"Mrs. Upham, don't say a word about that matter," said the grocer, in a most aggrieved tone; he seemed permanently hurt. "Whenever you are ready will suit me. Your credit is good; I'm not worrying a bit. We have some fine fresh asparagus today, and some extra fine fresh mushrooms. By

the way, have you heard anything about your jewelry? It was terrible, the way they broke into your place."

Mrs. Upham, singularly flustered, said, "No, they had not," and left the store.

"I stopped in to tell you," she said to the butcher a few minutes later, "that I shall surely pay you something on account this week. Mr. Upham says—"

The butcher winced, as from a blow.

"Mrs. Upham," he almost sobbed, "don't say a word about that matter. Whenever you are ready, that will suit me. Your credit is good. I'm not worrying a bit. We have some fine sweetbreads and squabs today. By the bye, have you heard anything new about your jewelry? It was terrible, the way they broke into your place."

Mrs. Upham's reply was brief, incoherent.

As one under hypnotic influence, she entered the bake shop, two doors up the avenue.

"I stopped in to tell you," she said to the baker, "that I shall surely pay you something on our account this week. Mr. Upham says that—"

The baker could barely keep the tears back, he took it so hard.

"Mrs. Upham," he protested, "don't say a word about that matter. Whenever you are ready, that will suit me. We have some fine eclaires and cream puffs today. By the way, have you heard anything new about your jewelry? It was terrible, the way they broke into your place."

Mrs. Upham could give him no hope, and he was still mingling sympathy with apologies when she left.

She went home, convinced.

Fourth Episode

"Didn't I tell you?" asked Mr. Upham that evening. "You don't need money these days if you only have brains. That was a large idea of mine, raising our robbery from teaspoons to diamonds. You'll have to be reconciled to your loss, though, for it's a cinch you'll never get your sparklers back."

"But when will you pay the grocer?" asked Mrs. Upham.

SATAN SPLASHES

By Helen Trask

SATAN sat on the rim of a wine glass splashing his tail in the cool liqueur.

"Take just a little sip," urged the man.

"I really should not," giggled the woman.

. . . . . .

"I feel full of the Devil," said the woman as the man kissed her.

WHEN a woman is cornered she does one of two things. She submits gracefully or she commits murder. . . . No woman ever murdered a good looking man.

WHEN a man calls you a reasonable little woman, be quite sure he is going to say something particularly disagreeable.

THE CLUB GUEST

By Ford Douglas

I

AMBROSE JOHNSON TUTHILL has left us—left us flat and without as much as his card with P.P.C. on the board in the hall, or thanks to any of us, or to even his brother-in-law, who put him up at the club. He was a thorn in our side the few days that he was with us. But we feel more kindly towards him now, for he has given us something to talk about. The good Lord knows we ought to be grateful to anyone who can furnish the slightest divertisement. The truth is we are a lot of dreary old bores at the club—sick of the sight of each other. The same old crowd at luncheon, the same old stories, the same old jokes, platitudes and bromides. We were desperate, and there was muttering among us. And then came Tuthill.

The first time I ever saw Tuthill was about eleven o'clock in the morning and he was squiffed. The next time I saw him was about eleven that night and he was still drunk. To be frank, I never did see him sober, though he was under my active observation for the greater part of the week that he lived at the club.

Ambrose entered our life through the medium of a visitor's card given him by his wife's brother, Mr. Abner P. Howell (wholesale hardware). His respectability was further vouched by Mr. Sam Lynch (hides and tallow). These endorsements, coming from the president and from a director of the club, not to mention the fact that the two gentlemen are our wealthiest members, seemed to have endowed Tuthill with certain rights, privileges and immunities that he might not have had under a less auspicious introduction.

Generally speaking, Tuthill did not measure up to his advance billing. He was a tall, loosely built man of the detachable-cuff type. An anthropologist would have been interested in his countenance, which resembled strikingly that great sideshow attraction, "Otto, the Horse with the Human Face." His teeth were scattered generously the length of his inch-long gums and neatly half-soled with yellow gold. These various features, together with the somewhat curious eyes of the Chinese cuttlefish, marked him as a man once seen not easily forgotten—this and his personality, which, indeed, was a thing apart.

According to Arthur, our guest during his stay broke every rule of the club—save section 29, which lays heavy penalties upon the tipping of servants. Now, Arthur is the youth who officiates in the grillroom—a sort of bucolic ganymede who has not yet entirely divested himself of the proud prerogatives of the American Citizen for the humbler rôle of club servant. We are all working hard on Arthur, laboring to attain in him less spontaneity of comment, but the influence of the sawmill, which was his early environment, still clings, and he is prone to interject himself into the conversation with sometimes disastrous results.

Tuthill and Arthur became friends at once. In Arthur, Tuthill saw a kindred soul. They became inseparable from the very first—so much so that one was compelled to lug one's drink from the bar and pour one's own highball.

But to start at the beginning—to go back to Picture I in Reel I.

It, as I have said, was eleven o'clock in the morning when I discovered our hero seated alone at a table in the grill. He was spiffled—therefore normal—and was carrying on a conversation with himself, holding his own on both sides of a hotly contested argument.

I watched him in the mirror as I stood at the bar drinking a pick-me-up, and noted that, having won the debate, he had dropped into one of his instantaneous cat-naps, for which he later became famous.

As I turned to leave he hailed me.

"Yesh, it was," he said. This with great firmness. He held a hand over an eye, the better to dispel double vision, I imagine, and reiterated, "Yesh, it was!"

"Yes what was?" inquired I, tarrying a moment by his chair.

He gazed at me with grave and solemn deliberation. His owl-like expression gave way to one of cunning, and then to a look of suspicion. In the long minute that followed, his face mirrored his thoughts and they ran, apparently, the entire gamut of human emotion.

"It was," he said, at last, "a brick house with a bay window!"

"Indeed," said I, not knowing what else to say.

"I'll take my oath on it!" he declared, hitting the table with a huge and hairy fist. "It was a brick house with a bay window. And I think it was two stories high, though I ain't for sure."

Mysteries interest me, being an idler, and so I took a chair at the table, at the same time introducing myself and handing him my card. He returned the courtesy by giving me his card, a very soiled one, and this after an interminable search of his many pockets, during which he emptied their contents on the table, making a picturesque scrap-heap of old letters, newspaper clippings, street-car transfers, United Cigar Stores coupons, a couple of railroad tickets, some money, a tremendous bunch of keys, and, what amazed me most of all, five or six metal beer-openers.

The card told that my new acquaintance was none other than Mr. Ambrose Johnson Tuthill, proprietor of the Majestic Coal Co.—why should a coal company be so named?—that its principal, and probably sole, office was in Springfield, and that its telephone number was South 4412. I gleaned from the number of lodge emblems around the outer edges of the card that its owner was a member of the organizations which they represented—there were a dozen of them, more or less—and the thought came to me that Mr. Tuthill was a "business-getter."

Little by little I got the coal man's story. It developed that he had come to Chicago accompanied in some mysterious and probably dubious manner by the bookkeeper of a Springfield box factory—a "queen," he assured me. They had arrived the previous day and had taken a taxi at the station for a *pension* in which the bookkeeper-queen, it appears, was now lodged.

Tuthill was combining business with pleasure, and so, hardly taking the time to more than get the lady established in this house, which he assured me somewhat equivocally was "all right," he departed in the same cab to meet his brother-in-law at the club. The business negotiations with his sister's husband were terminated abruptly by Mr. Howell's refusing to "come across"—whatever that is—but as a balm the brother-in-law had had a card issued to Tuthill giving him the privileges of the club for a limited time—and handing him this had told him to enjoy himself, and had left—rather hurriedly, Tuthill said.

Armed, now, by this powerful credential, Tuthill proceeded to get drunk with all possible dispatch. And in this undertaking he was entirely successful.

Not until the shades of evening had begun to mark the end of a perfect day did it occur to Tuthill to return to the woman who was watchfully waiting at the "all-right" *pension*. Yes; that was the obvious thing to do. He

remembered vaguely, then as now, that it was a brick house with a bay window. More than that, nothing.

He ordered a cab and told the driver to discover for him a brick house with a bay window—a quest upon which the taxi driver set out with great cheerfulness. At so much a mile he showed Mr. Tuthill not one but thousands of them—all as much alike as as many peas in a pod. The search continued through the night—stopping only for liquid sustenance for man and machine—and on far into the next day. The bill was something horrific. This, briefly, is the record of Mr. Tuthill's adventures up to the time I found him.

II

I KEEP very regular hours at the club. It is my custom to arrive there shortly before noon for luncheon, leaving precisely at two; and to return at about five for a drink or so before dinner.

And so, when I came into the grill room late in the afternoon, I found Tuthill slouched far down in his chair, evidently in an abyss of despair. He spoke to me huskily, his words having to come through the alcoholic nimbus which enveloped him. He told me that in his endeavor to locate the lost lady of Springfield he had, at Arthur's suggestion, visited a fortune-teller. The seeress, he said, had relieved him of two dollars and told him to return the next day with ten more, and that during the interim she would get in touch with Little Bright Eyes, a Siwash princess now abiding in the spirit world, who would instigate a keen and searching inquiry.

At slight expense I cheered him as best I could, but my efforts failed to rouse him. He voiced the belief that by now the Springfield lady must be near starvation—and, worse, she was sure to be in a state of collapse on account of his absence, and he gave me a touching picture of her, mad and desperate. From this he drooled into reminiscences of other experiences with women, the party of the second part being in each instance "a queen." When I left—for Tuthill's triangles were all of the same pattern and became wearisome—he had requisitioned Arthur as audience and was unfolding yet another episode of his career.

The day ended, so I learned, with one more incident. Arthur soon tired of Tuthill's stories, for the coal-man was a "repeater"—he told one story over three times—and suggested bed as a means of getting rid of him. To this Tuthill assented.

Now an ordinary person would have made some arrangement with the clerk for a room. But not so Tuthill. No, indeed! He simply picked up a key that happened to lay on the counter, lurched into the elevator, and disappeared.

An hour later our oldest resident member, Mr. August P. Dumbeck (wholesale drugs) came down the stairs four steps at a jump, and, breathing heavily, leaned against the cigar counter and wrote out his resignation. This he hurled at the clerk, together with some highly picturesque language.

In explanation it may be stated that Mr. Dumbeck was, and is, a very nervous and excitable person—a sort of a human shrapnel with a habit of exploding with little warning. And so, when the wholesale druggist entered his room—the room in which he took so much pride and which he had furnished at his own expense—and beheld Mr. Tuthill wallowing under the covers, completely attired, including shoes and hat, he let go all the high explosives in his composition. He blew up like a mine. Seizing the unfortunate Tuthill by the nape of the neck he hurled him from the room. The coal man never missed a snore. He rolled over in the hall and pillowing his head on a steam radiator, finished his nap in great comfort.

III

THE next day our guest was absent. No bulletins regarding him had been received in the grill room up to a late hour, and we all thought—hoped—that

he had returned to Springfield. At eleven-thirty we gossips of the after-theater crowd concluded to call the incident, or incidents, closed. Someone proposed a toast "Mr. Tuthill—may he drop dead." We were drinking to this when Tuthill entered the room.

He was accompanied by the blondest creature that it has ever been my fortune to behold—a triumph of the arts of the perfumer and of the makers of bleaches, powders, rouges and dyes. Her coloring was exquisite. Corot never did anything better.

Naturally we were petrified with amazement, not to say horror. For up to that time no woman had ever crossed our sacred threshold. Before we could interfere Arthur arranged chairs for them, and gave them the seal of his approval and the club's hospitality by shaking hands with the greatest cordiality.

Mr. Tuthill waved his arms to us in a sort of a general greeting. "Come over and meet my lady frien'," he said. "Arthur, bring s'quart o' Cook's."

When a hastily formed committee called Mr. Tuthill aside and informed him as gently as it could that ladies were not admitted he flew into high dudgeon.

"I'll resign from this here damn club," he shouted. "That's what I'll do."

One of our bolder spirits called Mr. Tuthill's attention to the fact that he was not a member of the club.

This news seemed to daze him for a minute. Then he jerked off his coat and threatened to whip us jointly and severally. Just how this would have ended cannot be told, for the blonde, sensing our hostility, was making for the door, and Tuthill hastened after her with many assurances that "Everything is all right, dearie."

IV

"SAY," said Arthur, the nert day at noon, "that there Mr. Tuthill has got some appetite, ain't he? He comes in here this morning a little after eight and asts me to recommend him something for breakfast. I recommends a Welsh rabbit. And he eats three of 'em."

"Three Welsh rarebits—for breakfast!" I cried.

"Sure; three of them there rabbits, and about a stein of rye."

I began to have a reluctant admiration for the man. How anyone can eat anything for breakfast is beyond my comprehension; but for a human being to eat three casseroles of melted cheese—and live!

During the day Tuthill's activities took a new and unexpected slant. He started out to sell every member a carload of coal, canvassing the club on all floors with great thoroughness and persistence, finally taking a position near the door and buttonholing my wretched associates as they came in.

Business was poor, however, and he denounced us all as a "bunch of tightwads."

Being called out of town I lost touch with the exploits of the Springfieldian, but when I returned, three days later, I found the club in a state of mutiny. The president's brother-in-law was proving an insufferable nuisance. In the grill room he reviled the members openly, calling the attention of Arthur to their many shortcomings.

But the grand climax of his adventures came that night. Having tried everything else, the coal dealer determined to get sober. As usual he conferred with Arthur as to the proper procedure, and that youth, after due consideration, advised the taking of a solemn pledge, sworn and subscribed to before a clergyman. This counsel met with Mr. Tuthill's instantaneous approval, and, though it was after midnight, he ordered a taxi and set out with all possible speed on his mission.

Arriving at the nearest rectory, Tuthill hammered on the door. There was no response, but the coal dealer was not a man to be denied. He was obsessed with the idea of signing a pledge, and pledge he would sign at all hazards.

So he moved around to the back of

the house. Here a screened porch was his first barrier. Hastily kicking in the frail portal to this, Tuthill rattled the knob of the kitchen door. It was locked and withstood his attack. He investigated the windows with better result, for he found one half-open. Raising the sash, he lifted himself in—falling heavily inside on a gas stove which he knocked over, together with a dozen pots and kettles.

Pastor Dugan's first impression, as he told afterwards, was that a cyclone had struck the house. Jumping from bed, he hastily switched on the lights and went down to the scene of the confusion below. Here he found Tuthill emerging, rather dazedly, from a pile of wrecked kitchenware. Now Pastor Dugan is a husky man, an athlete in his younger days, and he fell upon the intruder without hesitation.

"I've got you!" he cried, as he put a hammerlock on his victim. "Surrender, you burglar!"

"I'm goin' to sign a pledge," sputtered Tuthill.

"You're going to jail," said the clergyman.

And he did.

His brother-in-law got him out the next day, but not before he signed the coveted pledge before Pastor Dugan—he was insistent on this—and then, to everyone's unspeakable relief, he was shipped back to Springfield.

V

"YES," said one of our crowd, as we sat talking it over in the grill room, "Tuthill has had a wonderful week-end."

"He sure has," put in Arthur, picking up our empty glasses. "He's got a weak end all right, and, believe me, it ain't in his feet, neither."

A TERRIBLE END

By Hinson Stiles

IT was the most melancholy mood I had ever experienced. I was wearied of the disgusting process of living, and had already determined to seek the boundless and exquisite peace of the other world.

I seized a revolver and cocked it. I was desperate!

Just then a beautiful woman came along.

However, I am a man of resolution and decided to go the limit in my desperation.

So I married the woman.

THE senses of some women are interchangeable—their ears see, their lips listen and their eyes taste.

THE ladder to a woman's heart is runged with roses and scorpions.

MARRIAGE is a refuge for and from women.

WHEN LOVE WILL FILL YOUR HEART

By Charles Divine

OH, I was singing, fancy free,
A song that shook my house's side,
Until, to give it liberty,
I flung a window open wide.

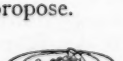
The wind, so highway-wise and smart,
Blew in and left this little line:
"Some day when love will fill your heart
You'll sing a song as big as mine."

STRATEGY

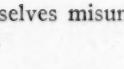
By Julia Gilbert

MARIE, the dull gown that clings to my figure—
And the pearls Harold gave me—
Soft lights and comfortable chairs before the fire—
Fragrant flowers, please—
And Jack's picture beneath the lamp—
Conspicuously—
Jerry is coming. . . . .
I wish Jerry to propose.

WOMEN love to believe themselves misunderstood. One never realizes this until one understands them.



THERE are no two ways alike to win a woman's love. But one thing is agreed upon: they are all lies.



THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

By —— ——

VIII

The Pitfalls in the Way of the Unwary

THE way of the transgressor may be said to lie through fields of asphodel as compared with the way of the struggler in the huge and tangled web of what is accepted as metropolitan society. Enemies, of the like of which that poor Christian who struggled up the stony way from the Slough o' Despond to the realms of bliss never dreamed, lie in ambush—and the reward is much less worth the effort.

At every move the climbers' tender feelings—if they have any—are lacerated, their sensitive skins excoriated, their fondest sentiments ruthlessly destroyed. These strugglers in the web are reduced to a condition of non-entity, and then, if they are properly humble, they are permitted to take the lowest place among the seats of the mighty.

Tried and true friends must be denied. As quickly as one has served his purpose and boosted the neophyte a step farther on his way he must be discarded. Parents must be sacrificed and ignored. Brothers and sisters must be cast off if they are of no use, and offspring cast off if they are detrimental. The dung-heaps of humble origin and honest labor must be scented with musk and planted with rose bushes, if the social climber would succeed.

Even the sacerdotal vestments of the church are not immune from the social moth, and the bishop's lawn is frequently mildewed with the ambition to shine in Vanity Fair.

Money is, of course, the first, the paramount essential. But given even this all-important, potential element, the mistakes made by the climbers would, in the telling, far exceed the limitations of this article, and to mark the gravestones of the failures would occupy time until the millennial dawn.

Frequently it is but the turning of a hair that makes the social success of one and marks the social damnation of another.

Though the same machinery may be employed by a dozen strugglers, it runs smoothly for but one. Brains do not always win out. We have seen the stupidest succeed and the cleverest fall in their still wet tracks.

New York is the crucible in which the climbers are tried out. Hither they flock from all points of the compass of the country, and the odour of their sizzling fat is ever in the air. Of all creeds and cults, from all walks in life, from all trades and professions they flock in to scorch their pretty tinsel wings; to bear insult, snub, humiliation for the ephemeral bliss of being enthroned in a parterre box at the Opera or putting their plebeian knees under the point lace covering of the dinner table of someone who has preceded them in the realms of snobbery and acquired the ecstatic privilege of snubbing.

And their mistakes!

Take the instance of the woman who drifted in on the wave of a great disaster that nearly cost her life, as it cost

the lives of a number of persistently heralded great social personages. She is a woman by no means devoid of charm of a certain kind. Handsome, in a generous way that reflects the rugged West from which she comes and from which she probably drew the dominating personality that was paradoxically her principal attraction and her greatest blemish, for it was the hair upon which her fate turned—to the left.

She appeared, suddenly, like a fresh, brisk breeze from the Sierras. She was gifted with a marked intelligence which she turned into the very proper channel of seeking such information as had been denied her by the limited educational possibilities of her youth. Her mind, being fresh and fertile, readily absorbed all that was fed to it and if it was sometimes the wrong seed, that was no fault of hers. Whatever it was, however, flourished exceeding well, and as the ambitious lady possessed also the "gift of gab" and could talk against a multitude, she made herself heard. Most important of all, she made herself heard by a certain all-powerful dowager of the oldest and most conservative Knickerbocker set—one whose word was law, whose smile was a command, and recognition from whom meant complacent acknowledgment from almost everybody else.

The breezy Westerner seemed launched upon a calm sea with full sails set before a stiff, propitious wind. To all appearances she had grasped success in her first effort and many were the envious glances that followed her wherever she went. Over-confidence made her bold. She was not the first to push open "the Glittering Gate" to society to find that there was nothing beyond.

Over-confidence had made her bold. Too bold. Her balance was not complete. Elated by the ease with which she had captured the dowager, she thought her conquest of the rest would be as facile. She plunged. She plunged in every way. She let loose with appalling freedom the radical speech that had amused, and in a measure won, her satirical old sponsor. At the same time she let loose a certain barbaric taste in dress which possibly was aboriginal; she let loose ideas with regard to her abode and personal surroundings which jarred on the sensitive and delicate nerves of those whom she wished most to conciliate; she unbridled her tongue—and there she made her fatal *faux pas*.

Only Beau Brummell, when alluding to the Prince of Wales, said: "Who is your fat friend?" killed himself so completely.

It was at Newport, at the Casino. All the world was there—Fifth Avenue, Back Bay, Rittenhouse Square, Mt. Vernon Place.

The eager neophyte, seated with one of the best known, best placed, best sired of New York matrons, watched the brilliant assemblage go by. She had quickly assimilated the easy manner of making sharp comment, which is the special franchise of those who have been always "in," and her sharp comment interested her companion if it did not always amuse her.

Until—

Until the kind old dowager sailed into view looking like a relic of those antique days when grandmamas slumbered softly after dinner instead of tangoing with lounge lizards at the night-time cabarets.

"And Mrs. Noah?"

"Mrs. Noah! She's a funny old frump, isn't she?

A funny old frump, indeed!

The fashionable matron was amused. She was vastly amused. She was so amused that her amusement became a malady with which she inoculated the whole of Newport. In less than a week all Bellevue Avenue was laughing at the poor, would-be-smart Westerner. The women giggled and the men guffawed and the noise of the hilarity reached the ears of Mrs. Noah.

It is true. She was a funny old frump. Perhaps she knew it herself. Perhaps she knew that everybody else knew it, but that was no reason why

she should permit the fact to be bandied about by a mere nobody.

So Mrs. Noah's car ceased to stop at Mrs. Westerner's door when the old dowager rode out of afternoons as it had been wont to do, and Mrs. Westerner ceased to figure at her hebdomadal receptions. Not seeing her at Mrs. Noah's, the rest of the world forgot to leave cards on her. Much of it forgot to bow to her when it met her on the Ocean Drive.

A funny old frump! Upon the perfectly innocent assumption of a prerogative to which she had no right, the prerogative of glib, free speech, was shattered the most brilliant chance of a really estimable and likeable woman.

II

TAKE the case of Mrs. Midas.

Mrs. Midas is as beautiful as a Phydian Venus. She has the soft, sweet voice of silver strings in a summer breeze. Her eyes are soft and lustrous as old Chinese lacquer. Her lips, untouched by pigment, are luscious, moist and red. Her cheeks have the ineffable bloom of adolescence. Her shoulders are like Parian marble without a blemish. Her hands are delicate, yet strong, like the delicate flowers carved with infinite patience from chunks of jade.

The wealth of Mrs. Midas is like the Sands of Pactolus. She has a mansion in Fifth Avenue, a chateau at Newport, a fairy palace in the South, a fantastic "Camp" in the Adirondacks, a *pied-à-terre* in Paris and a villa at Monte Carlo. She has a yacht that rivals the most luxurious ocean liner, a houseboat that accommodates fifty guests and enough motor cars to establish a very considerable public service.

I have never heard her speak ill of anyone. She never gossips, nor does she listen to gossip, but of course that does not exempt her from being gossipped about. But that is a mere detail. Everybody is gossipped about.

With such armament why should not Mrs. Midas be at the top of everything? Why should she not know Mrs. de Puyster Knickerbocker and have that old dame at her dinners? Mrs. de Puyster Knickerbocker is not an ornament to be coveted for its beauty. She has the face of a hawk and hangs her family jewels on a rack of bones. Her words, when she deigns to utter any, are projected from her mouth like a sore throat gargle and they are just as stringent. But she is an *objet de vertu —et de grande marque.*

Why should not Mrs. Midas preside at charity fairs, open balls, christen ships, head lists of patronesses and figure constantly in the Sunday newspapers? She is charitable enough, Lord knows. No appeal passes her by unheard. Her cheque book is at everybody's command. She supports families, clothes children, helps generously struggling talent. She gives parties that are staggering, the food deserves the *cordon bleu,* the wines would grace the board of a Petronius and yet poor Mrs. Midas has not yet stepped off the very lowest round of the social ladder.

Why? Some say, *mirabile dictu!*— it is because she has a past. A past— in society! Oh, la, la! What an insuperable obstacle!

No. The real reason is that Mrs. Midas is too generous. She lacks discrimination. She has not yet learned that in the world to which she aspires coronets are more than kind hearts.

She cannot or will not realize that she must snub in order to escape snubbing, that she must mow down to escape being mowed down, that her blazoned society juggernaut must blithely crush all who stand in her way or would impede her progress. But the twig will not be bent in her case. And here is the paradox of it all. She will not cut an old friend that she may be smiled upon by a faded *mondaine* in moth-eaten bombazine.

Her parties are failures, her dinners funeral feasts, for usually they are eaten by the servants. The occasional intrepid explorer from the smart set who is lured to one of them pays for her entertainment with caustic comment in

which recurs insistently, constantly: "Oh, the people she had!"

That is her one great mistake: "The people she had."

And yet, all "those people" were not detrimentals. In Europe, where society as an organization is better understood because it has had centuries of bringing up, it would be said, probably, that her house is rather an amusing one. One meets so many strange people there. But upon that slender thread her social palengenesis fails.

Is she angry? Not in the least. She takes it all good humoredly and struggles on. As Thackeray says, though I doubt that she has ever read a page of him, "It is best to be laughing-mad or crying-mad in the world." She is neither.

She is not like the climber who makes the mistake of having too many ancestors.

Alackaday, *she* is of a very common sort. We have *her* with us always—like the poor. That is trite. Truth is always trite—and unpleasant as it is trite. Why be ashamed of it? But we are ashamed, both of truth and triteness. More's the pity. She is an insufferable nuisance with her genealogical tree whose roots penetrate diluvian soil. They pop up, her ancestors, at all sorts of inconvenient moments. They are a stock in trade more valuable—to their owner—than potatoes in the present market, and just as starchy and liable to wilt in the moisture of investigation.

III

MRS. ESCUTCHEON is an example of the above species. She has spent years of time that would have been worth while in her kitchen or her nursery in growing a family tree. It is a marvelous achievement in patriarchal arboriculture. When I discovered her once with a huge sheet of paper spread out before her, upon which, in the shape of a fan, was traced out the ramifications of her family, my astonishment was open and frank.

"That," she informed me, "is my family tree. Here at the base are Adam and Eve," and so on down through the prophets she had this apocryphal chart arranged to a certain medieval personage from whom she claims came all the glory of her race. She at least is original. She scorns that popular progenitor, William the Norman. And the best of it is, she really believes it all.

You will read her name almost every day in the newspapers. She sees that it gets there by her own constant and untiring effort. The medieval personage is never forgotten. His recurrence is as sure as the seasons, and it is through him, her greatest asset, that she fails.

In this madness for a great and umbrageous family tree, she forgets essentials. She runs to fads. She reads Gertrude Stein and raves about Matisse.

Her Sunday afternoons are "highbrow" one week, bohemian the next, suffragette another. She affects exotic religions and descants on literature, the obvious source of her information being Bartlett, omnipresent on her library table. There is always a sprinkling of what is colloquially known as "real people." But whether the ostensible object of the day is an Indian Swami or the last new disciple of New Thought, the tree is ever in evidence.

In her adorable drawing-room, furnished most tastefully with clever copies of Sheraton and Chippendale, hung with faithfully executed—and executed is the word—fac-similes of Sir Joshua, of Gainsborough and even of some middle-age limnist of the great progenitor, one meets prelates, poets, authors, journalists, pretty women, actresses, musicians, artists, singers, clever men, handsome men, occasionally diplomatists and always the sprinkling of the "real people."

It is her custom to invite on these days certain favoured ones of the occasion to remain to dinner. The intention is everything that is charming. Unfortunately one does not dine on intentions, even in these days of war

prices. The menu is attenuated to a degree. Once, I recall, it consisted of a much lactated oyster stew and champagne. The rest was made up of pleasant talk, the principal subject of which was the progenitor. Two women of the desired set were included that evening. They never went again to the house. One of them told me that barmecide feasts were not to her liking. I did not blame her. Women as well as men are susceptible to food, and if you reach a man's heart through his stomach it might be said that a woman's favor is not secured by neglect of it.

The fame of the Sabbath dinners spread rapidly. They became a joke that the well-meaning hostess never heard, or if she did she never appreciated it, for she still uses the frugal functions plus her energetic cultivation of the famous tree as her most stable stepping-stones to her coveted goal. And after many years she is still on the dexter side.

Dear thing, she is an epitome of the social struggler.

An epitome of the worst efforts. She has not even disdained that most fatal of all efforts—going to entertainments where she was not expected.

The climber hesitates at nothing.

The affair was an exclusive subscription dance for débutantes and young girls. It was an institution, organized many years ago, in fact in colonial times. As the *sine qua non* of a débutante's social success it was the thing most desirable. The gentle climber had never been able to make it.

Her card was played when she secured as a house guest a very well-placed girl from a neighboring city to stay with her over the period of the dance. The girl knew everyone. On the night of the dance her hostess gave a dinner to which she invited all the friends of her young visitor and all of whom were due at the subscription dance. The climber was, of course, not expected. But she went. The girls had to be chaperoned.

Her reception would have made a lasting impression on one less hardened and determined. She had played her card and it was not a trump.

The matron who had charge of the dance, a sour old dowager upon whose shoulders had fallen, more by accident than design, the mantle of a more popular and gracious woman, eyed her coldly; greeted the girls but overlooked their chaperon. It was not polite, but it did not feaze the climber. She had a lovely time at the dance, though she was made to feel later the extent of her *faux pas*.

Gossip got the story. It was retailed and detailed at the tea tables, laughed at at luncheons and discussed at dinners. It furnished an additional reason for the snubbing of the climber even more patent than the constant hawking of the famous ancestor.

A season ago she tried Newport. The attempt, when it did not excite derision, evoked laughter—which is worse. The ancestor was taken out of his cerements and his worm-riddled bones rattled a *danse macabre* from Bailey's Beach to Miantonomi Hill. The noise was like the rumble of a sight-seeing hack. It made no impression and the climber is still climbing.

IV

In contradistinction to this misguided lady there is the case of another whose origin was in the same town. She has been successful. She illustrates most beautifully the reward of concentration.

Of a most humble but decent family, she started out at the beginning with the idea of conquering society. She has accomplished her end. Whether the end justifies the means is a matter to be decided by the psychologists.

She started by making a rich marriage. It brooks nothing that the man to whom she was married was and is a nonentity. The all-important *vade mecum*, the bank account, offset all else.

History has it that when the man's late father, a great financial power in the country, heard of the engagement he told the girl that she ought not to marry his son, as he was—well, to put

it mildly, a bit *detraqué*. History also says that she replied, "He is good enough for me."

The result has been everything that she could wish—socially. She sits enshrined and blazing with jewels in her box at the opera; she has a villa on the cliffs at Newport and a mansion in town. Flunkies in breeches and powder stand in her halls. Her stationery is ornamented with the most wonderful coat-of-arms, which comes from God knows where, and the world genuflects before her and supplicates her smiles.

She has been tactful. She has swept everything before her.

It matters not that two of her mentally deficient children were brought up in the kitchen, the stable, any place but with her, and have been finally shunted off to remote places where they are effectively out of the way. She has succeeded. The plaudits of the frivolous world are more to her than maternity or mother-love. She revels in the tinsel of the social circus.

V

THEN there is Mrs. Boldtype. You know her well, whether you live in the most remote fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains or in the metropolis. Even though the newspapers reach you but once a year, for in them she is always figuring. But she has never actually succeeded. She has tried and tried. She has married her daughters to titles and rehabilitated with her wealth more tottering castles and chateaux in Europe than any other woman in America.

And still the supremest height to which she has risen is to see her drawing-room crowded with an *olla podrida* of all sorts and conditions, eating and drinking together for once if nevermore.

It is said that Mrs. Boldtype is democratic. That is charitable, at least.

Her "days" are fearful and wonderful. Sileicuss calls them the hebdomodal tombola, and when I asked him why he said, "Because I have gone there once a week, faithfully, season in and season out, and never have drawn a prize."

It is her democracy that is Mrs. Boldtype's fatal flaw.

Mrs. Psalter affects Sunday nights. Mrs. Psalter is large and rubicund. She ought to have day-dawn rackets. But she insists on Sunday nights—mild and elegant gatherings, occasionally enlivened by a murder—perpetrated by the hostess on the luckless language of her country.

That criminal tendency is poor Mrs. Psalter's stumbling-block. One really should suppress all such weaknesses and cultivate the past participle of the verb to be if one would rub shoulders with and converse with—Society.

VI

A LONG, long time ago, when New York society in its present form was just bursting its chrysalis, some *arbiter elegantiarum* formulated a set of rules for the guidance of the neophyte which are worth repeating:

"Cultivate everyone. Regard every person as a desirable flower worth picking. Later on, when your drawing-room is famous, you can discard those whom experience may have taught you to look upon as weeds—but be careful that the weeds do not turn out to be poison ivy.

"They may not be only poison ivy, but through the vicissitudes of affairs those who today may seem offensive, tomorrow will be able to tell you to chase yourself to a back seat.

"Affect not to believe evil of anyone with whom it is expedient to be on friendly terms. You probably will believe it anyway, but woe betide you if during the confidences inspired by the bridge table or a tête-à-tête cocktail you air your too pungent opinions of the frailties of those who are a step beyond you.

"Be calm. But let not your calmness be the calmness of stupidity.

"Never speak ill of anyone without in the same breath paying them a compliment. And let the compliment pre-

cede the derogation. The one will be quoted by your enemy, the other you can quote yourself.

"Never hesitate to retract an ill-natured remark, provided that you do it with that due self-respect which permits you to first deny having uttered it.

"Never construe an affront as such, unless compelled to do so.

"Remember always that society is the soul of the salon.

"Affect to know nothing, thus you learn everything.

"Encourage each person in his pursuit, thus you make yourself solid with the small fry, who may not amount to much, but, like the minnows in the trout stream, may nibble your bait away.

"Manifest a lively interest in the arts —the talents and abilities of all. They may be of minus quantity or mediocre quality, but the air of patronage is pleasant to yourself and is not always unpleasant to its recipients.

"Confer favors—confer favors—
"After they have been sought."

THE WARDEN'S SON

By Harry Kemp

FATHER, O father, what have you done
With Ruddy Kervil, the Warden's son?
—He has gone forth under the sky
To watch the young grey goshawks fly.

O father, father, what have you done
With the Game Warden's only son?
—He has gone forth to fish for me
Where the bitter marsh runs black to the sea.

O father, my father, what have you done
With a grey-faced woman's only son?
—He has gone forth to hunt, alone,
The deer that drink by Yarbury stone.

My father, my father, what have you done
With my own lover, the warden's son?
—By Yarvel Mere is a track of red. . . . .
And the crows are gathering overhead!

THE one incontrovertible proof that no woman ever truly knows herself is that there is no record of a female cynic.

THE spirit of the New Woman: the aspiration of a kitchen utensil to be a grand piano.

NACRE

By Clyde Criswell

THE jeweled peacocks utter their cacophonous wail in gardens illumined by a frozen moon.

Above the ancient wall lean the venerable branches of antique poplars.

Upon a bench of mottled marble lies a silvery girl, playing with a string of Orient pearls that falls in loops about her; her lassitude is stirred by a thin sound, as of flutes, from beyond the mouldering wall.

Slowly and imperiously the peacocks trail past her their superb and iridescent trains. Smiling at their hauteur, she flings over the neck of the most splendid the rope of pearls.

In infinite languor she listens to the fluting beyond the wall.

Over the high spray of a fountain the pale moon is poised like a silver ball: it seems sustained by the dancing drops, as in Arabian fountains; into the stained marble basin falls always the ceaseless cascade of pearls—or are they tears?

Eternally the peacocks utter their dissonant and melancholy wail, as though in lamentation.

THE SERENADE

By Rita Drayton

SWEET strains of music came to my window. It was in June at twilight and the air was redolent with the fragrance of late fruit blossoms. I saw a single star twinkling in the sky. As I rested my chin on my slender hand, I wondered who it was who loved me.

There came a tapping at my window. . . . .

It was an organ grinder's monkey begging for pennies.

THE tragedy of the woman of thirty-nine is not that she is getting old, but that she is still young.

THE moment a woman is obsessed with a desire to be an actress she ceases to be an actress.

BLESSED AMONG WOMEN

By Neeta Marquis

BEING a man myself, I never thought much of that person who declared that the more he saw of men, the better he liked dogs. Male or female, the maker of the epigram was off the normal. But since observing the case of Miss O'Toole and the man involved in it, I am constrained to admit that a cur would have to be as yellow as a jaundiced mulatto to stand anything but flattering comparison with some men.

Even our astute Miss Johnson, who had kindergartened for two decades in the purlieus of old Silver street, could not quite place Miss O'Toole, although she learned that a sister of the latter's, the wife of a druggist over in Mill Valley, had secured the boarding place for her through a friend of our landlady's. None of us could help liking her, for she was unfailingly good-natured and friendly, although her manner was sometimes a bit loud.

She was close to her forties, if not already embarked on them, but there was a youthful vivacity in her eyes, which were greenish in color, flecked with brown. Her hair was reddish, and she had freckles on the back of her neck,—I used to think that last one of the cardinal sins in a woman. She was large, and of the type that is not bad-looking except when dressed up. In a loose pongee blouse with a rolling chair, a dark blue four-in-hand and a dark blue skirt, she was attractive in a breezy, Western way. This was her customary dress when sewing at the tailor shop in the next block, varied with white waists for dinner wear.

Being credited with the full amount of traditional masculine obtuseness, I was not supposed to catch the delicate shades of circumstance, and so Miss Johnson used to drop me more or less elaborate hints; but it did not take me long to understand for myself when Miss O'Toole was expecting the man to come to see her.

On those occasions she would invariably kill her looks and obscure her personality with her only "other clothes," and proceed to haunt the parlor windows with a nervous intensity she futively tried to disguise with her usual jolly, off-hand manner. I used to think to myself that I wouldn't come any oftener than the man did, if I knew it would drive her to such dress as that.

Her skirt was black—voile, Miss Johnson said—and conspicuously *de mode,* even to me. The waist was of stiff white silk with long sleeves and high neck, and it pushed up in front in a way to destroy the naturally good lines of her figure. With it, she wore a high black velvet collar as big as a horse collar, with a bow of wide, bright, hard blue ribbon just under her chin, which gave her a striking resemblance to a tortoise shell cat. Her hair was the sort that never seemed to yield to kind treatment, but apparently had to be dragged into place and forcibly detained there.

On these gala occasions she arranged it with an extra twist as artificial as it was unbecoming.

Trigged out thus, she was absurd, and she was pathetic.

I saw the man only twice during the four months I was at the house, although Miss Johnson said he came three times, and Miss O'Toole made a tabby-in-waiting of herself several

other times when he failed to come. I could always tell when he had not appeared, by the extra gaiety with which Miss O'Toole greeted us at breakfast the next morning, and by the hollow look around her eyes. The man was coarse-featured and dark, and gave an impression of forcefulness which I felt could easily degenerate into brutality. He was rather handsome, in a way, however, and might have been almost anything from a deputy sheriff to a professional gambler.

Miss Johnson confessed that she tried, once, to draw Miss O'Toole out about her "friend"—she never mentioned his name, and always contrived to avoid introducing him—but that her usually loquacious Irish tongue at once became guarded. She merely intimated that he was some sort of a "promoter," whose business kept him much away from the city.

Finally, a period of at least two months went by during which I was reasonably sure she had not seen him. I don't know that I thought so very much about it, but I liked Miss O'Toole, always so jolly and pleasant, and I could feel a change coming over her. She grew quiet and a little anxious-looking, though she always made a good pretense of cheerfulness at the table.

Miss Johnson confided to me that it was the slack season at the tailor shop, and that to her knowledge Miss O'Toole had had only three days' work the previous week.

This might explain a good deal. It was doubtless the reason of the long life of those criminal "best clothes," and the continuance of some of the white waists with square necks long after wishbone effects had appeared on Miss Johnson and the other women.

I overheard Miss O'Toole excusing herself from joining the others on their frequent excursions to the new picture theater in the next block those evenings. She said the films hurt her eyes —which may have been the reason, of course. I was figuring on domestic expenditures myself those days, and I couldn't see for the life of me how hit-and-miss day wages from a second-rate tailor could keep a woman in clothes alone, to say nothing of incidentals and the really considerable item of board. My interest in Miss O'Toole was genuine enough to make me uncomfortable over the situation, but I supposed her married sister was helping her out. It was obvious that someone must be.

Three times in those fogless, quiet, brilliantly starry evenings of early fall, I caught the signal of the blue tabby-cat bow at the front windows as I went out to see my own girl,—or the one I consumingly wanted for mine,—and Miss O'Toole's gallant, but unconsciously wistful look above it made me forget the freckles on the back of her neck, and wonder what the men of this human family have ever done to deserve the devotion so many millions of them get from loyal-hearted women.

Perhaps there is a certain clairvoyance which comes to a person who is himself in love, with regard to love in its relations with others. Anyway, it occurred to me, when I saw her with that strained, expectant look on her face, that this was a waning, not a waxing, affair, and that each time she waited, she feared it might be a waiting for always. As she sat slightly bent forward in her chair, almost as if listening for something she could not see, or like a bird with wings half-poised for flight, I found myself wondering vaguely what sort of nest would finally yield repose to her unsettled heart.

Then, one of those pleasant nights, when I returned at about eleven o'clock, I found Miss O'Toole sitting on the front steps, with the man beside her in low-toned conversation.

They had evidently been out together, for she had her hat on.

As I passed she glanced up and greeted me with a look of audacious coquetry which transformed her. She appeared to have met the supreme crisis of her life, and to have passed it not only safely, but rapturously.

The impression she gave me was fairly electric. She was no longer a forlorn female clinging desperately to the crumbling edge of youth and love, but, in spite of the awful blue bow under her chin, she was the eternal type of triumphant, courted Femininity.

As I closed the door I saw her settle down for another cosy session with the object of her faithfulness, who had had the grace to lift his hat as I bowed, but had at once resumed it.

They stayed there until nearly one o'clock. I knew, for my windows opened just above the porch, and I had something of my own to think about that kept me awake later than that. I happened to be the last one in, so that their talk was undisturbed, and it remained subdued enough to arouse no other attention from within.

If it had not been for that transcendent something in Miss O'Toole's manner which I had just glimpsed—that something so perfect in assurance and faith—I would have adhered to my original suspicion that the man was trying gradually to break with her, and that the linked sweetness of this long-drawn-out occasion was only the precursor to a more lengthy period of neglect, if not actual abandonment; but I was not so sure of the situation now.

I did not see Miss O'Toole again until dinner the next night, when that new, vital atmosphere still enveloped her. She looked ten years younger than she had twenty-four hours before. She even seemed more refined, which struck me as odd, considering the man. I made up my mind that I must have been doing him rank injustice.

Even her hair seemed in a more accommodating mood than usual, and fluffed a little around her face. Her cheeks were brightly flushed, her greenish eyes with the warm brown flecks in them were dancing with vivacity, and some inspiration had led her to leave off the black velvet neckyoke and turn the white silk of her best waist in at the front in a becoming V, around which a little frill of lace or net stood up. In short, she was a vivid example of the transfiguring power of happiness.

A glittering white stone caught the light on her left hand.

I had not credited the man with "class" enough to buy a two carat stone for any purpose, unless it was personal adornment. But when I caught the secret ecstasy with which Miss O'Toole glanced at it, and noted the joy that pulsed with every breath she took—not mere pride, but an inward radiance which obviously drove away all memory of her humiliated nights of waiting, of her precarious livelihood, and of her indeterminate position generally—I knew that if a mere stone set in a gold band and given by me could possibly bring such rapture to the girl in my mind, I would never spend a second thought on the hole the purchase of it made in my savings account. It would be an investment bringing the richest sort of return.

At the dinner table, every eye took in the new ring and its significance.

I could see that our experience-hardened landlady and the skeptical Miss Richards, who was private secretary to a railroad magnate, were interested in spite of themselves.

Miss Johnson, however, was the one to speak out about it, in her downright way.

"There's something terribly dazzling about you tonight, Miss O'Toole!" she said gaily.

Miss O'Toole flushed happily, laughed, and held up her hand that we might have a better view.

"Isn't it a beauty?" she exclaimed, with a girlish *naïveté* which would have disarmed envy incarnate. "I'm awfully pleased over it!"

Even her voice had gained in richness.

Miss Richards bent forward graciously for a closer look, and to accommodate her, Miss O'Toole slipped the ring off and handed it to me to pass along. It went all around, everyone exclaiming over it gratifyingly. Old Thibodeau was the last to finger it, and he scrutinized it closely.

"It's an unusually fine stone, isn't it?" asked Miss O'Toole with eager pleasure. "Of course, I know it must be, for the one who gave it to me wouldn't give any other kind!"

Even Thibodeau's worldly old face looked genuinely impressed, his eye lighting with the discriminating appreciation of the connoisseur.

He rose, made a courtly bow, and returned the token of love and fealty as if relinquishing the crown jewel of a Hindu prince.

"Yours truly!" he said, with the quaint inflection which made his American slang delicious.

He was so droll and charming that we all laughed, and thrilled with a little of Miss O'Toole's own excited happiness as she slipped the trinket back on her finger, for Thibodeau's approval of anything, from a salad to a plan, immediately invested it with mysteriously heightened excellence.

One could see with half an eye that Miss O'Toole's stock had risen a great many points with all the women.

After we had left the table, I saw Miss Johnson slip her arm around her and propose to treat the whole feminine crowd to a picture show at once in honor of the event. Miss Richards promptly took it up, though she usually held off from the others, and said she would stand for the ice cream sodas.

A little later, while Thibodeau and I were having our cigars together on the strip of lawn dividing our domicile from the decayed mansion next door, the women strolled past, and Miss O'Toole was the center of the laughing group. She was not in the least embarrassed by her sudden accession of popularity, but apparently considered it the tribute due to her status as one of the blessed among women. She was certainly charming, in a new, poised, gracious way, as she waved a coquettish good-by in our direction.

Great guns! What a pity there isn't more real happiness in life, when it gives beauty for ashes, and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, as it had in this case!

"I guess she's landed him safely at last," I said rather flippantly, not meaning it to carry the obnoxious masculine sound the words implied, but really, I think, to keep Thibodeau from suspecting that my emotions were a bit touched. "If he's pledged himself to the extent of two hundred and fifty, he'll probably come back oftener in the future, to look after his property."

Thibodeau smoked on in silence a while, then remarked casually:

"When I lived in New York I was with Tiffany for several years, and became a pretty fair judge of diamonds."

"How does this one strike you?" I asked. "I know little about them myself, except that no woman feels herself properly engaged without one."

He delicately removed the ash from his cigar before speaking again.

"That quality," he said in his dry little French way, "sells at wholesale for about two dollars and seventy-five cents."

ONE can always forgive a girl for being homely if she has a pretty sister.

IF there had been no Adam in Eden, Eve would have married the serpent.

UNFORBIDDEN

By Hugh Kahler

JOHN WOODHOUSE lay in a disordered huddle of pillows and wrinkled, untidy linen, a bulky, misshapen figure, almost comic in the unfamiliar undress and posture of a man sickening to death. His thin hair, which Vass had never seen otherwise than painfully wetted and brushed over the uneven tonsure at the back of his skull, now hung, lank and stringy, in a grotesque fringe that half-concealed the ear and the thick, corded neck; the heavy, dull face, soiled by a stubble of grey beard, reminded Vass of the solemn countenances of actors in primitive farce.

Vass had come with a nebulous anticipation of finding Woodhouse subtly touched with the dignity of death, somehow lifted above the commonplace by that thing which, itself the one perfect commonplace, we persist in regarding as in some fashion distinguishing those whom it menaces most imminently from those threatened from a little wider distance. Instead, he saw a middle-aged man, absurd in a loose night-shirt edged with red stitching, lying ungracefully in a tumbled, ugly bed, his little artifices of everyday disguise stripped from him to leave him more ridiculous than he had been as Vass had known him.

So strong was the impression of a grotesque and comic mask that Vass stiffened the muscles of his face to forbid a smile, and lowered his lids to hide the gleam of amusement in his eyes. Woodhouse moved clumsily to face his visitor, his heavy jaw sagging and protruding, his eyes puzzled. Vass had a fleeting memory of the look he had seen in a bull, as yet unstirred to madness, surveying its tormentors in the centre of the ring.

"I'm going to die, Vass."

Woodhouse spoke levelly, in the same toneless, flat voice with which he might have ordered his car or refused a loan.

Vass, moved by the tiresome impulse to deny obvious truths because they are unpleasant, shook his head.

"Nonsense, Woodhouse—get that idea out of your mind. Buck up—"

"I'm going to die," repeated the other, as if he had not heard. "I wanted to talk to you about—Minna."

He lowered his voice a little on the name, and his eyes clouded with a sticky, sentimental mist which made the face more irresistibly laughable than ever.

Again Vass was conscious of an effort as he kept his eyes and lips conventionally grave. Woodhouse wanted to talk about Minna! A swift vision of her flashed before his brain—tall, and cool and quiet, with a wistful hint of humor in her eye, a woman who contrived in some fashion of her own to convey an impression of fire without heat, a creature who was at once aloof from the flesh and yet vividly, passionately alive.

The contrast between Woodhouse, gross, material, clumsy, and the woman he had somehow managed to marry, pointed the jest for Vass. The man's stupidity was the final, fitting touch. He did not even guess. He thought of Vass as *his* friend, admitted on easy terms of intimacy to the household because Woodhouse liked and trusted and patently admired him. It did not even occur to him to wonder—

"Yes, Woodhouse. I—if I can do anything—"

Woodhouse regarded him steadily.

Something brought a tingling sense of embarrassment to Vass, under that level stare. After all, the man was dying . . . there was nothing funny about it . . . death was death, whether it chose a king for its target or such a person as poor Woodhouse. . . .

"I—I'm leaving her—rather too well off, Vass . . . she is to have it all—without any . . . restrictions. It—it's a risk—money exposes a woman to—to trickery and fraud. And Minna hasn't—well—experience. She—she judges men by superficial traits. I'm afraid she'll make trouble for herself, if no one stands by. . . ."

Vass leaned toward him.

"I'll stand by, Woodhouse," he said quickly. "I—I'd have done that without asking—for her sake as well as yours. But you—you needn't worry about her. She can take care of herself. . . ."

"I don't want you to stand by." Woodhouse breathed with an unpleasant rasp. "I want you to marry her, Vass. I—I've guessed that you care. You tried to hide it, but I see more than people think. I'll feel a little easier about dropping out if I know that you're going to take care of her. I—I'd like to have you promise me, if you don't mind. . . ."

Vass straightened abruptly.

"I promise, then." A sudden impulse to be honest with Woodhouse gripped him. "I—I would have asked her, anyway, you know . . . I—it was because of her that I came here—I've been her friend, not yours. I—I've always wanted her, Woodhouse."

The frowsy head jerked affirmatively.

"I knew—you never fooled me. I saw it, all along. And—and she—she feels the same way about it, Vass—I suppose you know that, too, eh?"

Vass felt his cheeks pricking. It was humiliating to discover that this stupid fellow had penetrated his pretense from the first.

To be sure he had taken scant pains to disguise the truth—he had taken Woodhouse's dullness for granted. But the thought that those dull eyes had followed him understandingly from the beginning, had quietly looked on while he and Minna . . . it annoyed him. He nodded, shortly.

"I—I guessed that she—"

"I don't mean guessing. No man can guess the truth about a woman. I mean knowing—you've talked it over, between you—you aren't guessing when you say that she'll marry you, when I'm out of the way, if you ask her.

"We—we understand each other, I think."

Vass could not quite admit the truth, even now. He was conscious of a growing anger at the other's intrusions upon a matter sacredly private. What he and Minna felt toward each other was no affair of an outsider. That the outsider chanced to be Minna's husband only aggravated his offence in thrusting himself between them like this.

Woodhouse nodded.

"I—only wanted to be sure," he said, humbly. "I—I don't feel as if I knew Minna very well, Vass. I can't wholly trust my judgment about her. I wanted to ask you. It makes things easier to know that. . . ."

"I'm glad I told you, then." Vass got to his feet, suddenly aware of a choking distate for his surroundings, an eagerness for the clean air of outdoors, for the feel of the sun and the smell of the spring leaves—anything to take the taint of death from his nostrils. It was not fear, but disgust. He felt himself near to something foul and tawdry and coarse. Somehow it infected even the thought of Minna. She lived in this house . . . ugh! He loosened his collar.

"I'm much obliged to you for telling me the facts," said Woodhouse calmly. "Some men would have lied about it. I thought I could count on you."

"Well, I—I've got to be going, Woodhouse. I—I hope you're wrong

about—about your condition, you know—"

"You hope I'll hurry up and get out of your way, you mean." Woodhouse spoke without a change of tone. "Don't deny it—I'm counting on your feeling that way. I want to be sure that you're eager to read my name in the obituary column. The more impatient you are about it the better I'll feel, Vass. Stick to the facts—don't try to feed me with cheap, commonplace lies. You're glad I'm dying and you wish I'd be a bit quicker about it. Don't you?"

Vass yielded to a surging impulse to drop the mask utterly. His lips drew away from his teeth.

"Yes," he snarled. "Yes—I do—if you must have it! You're in my way—the sooner you're out of it, the better. If I'd had any money I'd have taken her away from you long ago. What right has a man like you to a woman like that? You never—she never cared a straw for you—she married you because of the money—she's stuck it out because of the money—and she'll spend it on—"

Woodhouse chuckled.

"That's fine!" he said, with a hint of life in his voice. "That's what I wanted to hear. You couldn't have said anything that would have helped half as much. Goodbye, Vass—much obliged. I'll do my best to clear the track for you."

He thrust out one blunt, gross hand, already shrunken and greyed as the life ebbed back from it.

Vass drew away, as from something unclean.

Woodhouse chuckled again.

"Not even that, eh? Good! So much the better!"

His stony laughter followed Vass out of the room and out of the house.

Two days later he kept his promise. Minna telephoned the news to Vass, her voice untouched with excitement. He did not see her until the funeral. She asked him not to come, and he was conscious of a vague relief. Somehow the idea of tender passages with John Woodhouse's widow, while John Woodhouse lay untidily in his coffin under the same roof, repelled. It pleased Vass to think that Minna felt as he did about this.

He went to the funeral, of course. He had been the dead man's friend. It would have roused comment had he failed in this final courtesy.

He shuddered a little as he looked, for the last time, on John Woodhouse's heavy face blenched and ghastly. There was a frozen smile on the thick, harsh lips.

John Woodhouse looked as if he had carried a joke into eternity with him.

II

He read the newspaper references to John Woodhouse's will with a returning complacency. There had been moments when he had doubted whether Woodhouse had meant what he said about Minna's inheritance. In his place, Vass would have taken a keen satisfaction in deliberately stirring false hopes; the memory of his incautious outburst, his unconcealed enmity, in response to Woodhouse's dully persistent prodding, woke a vague anxiety in him lest he might have cost Minna her money or her independence by his want of discretion in that interview. But the newspapers set his mind speedily at rest.

The will, as laconic and graceless as Woodhouse's normal speech, bluntly bequeathed everything to "my wife, Minna Telfair Woodhouse," without restrictions or impediments of any description. Minna was made sole executrix, without bond, absolute mistress of all that John Woodhouse had spent his neutral-tinted life in accumulating.

Somehow Vass held back, however. Perhaps it was a certain shame for his mean doubts of the dead man which robbed the prospect of seeing Minna of its normal charm; perhaps it was a kind of decency which forbade unseemly haste in stepping toward dead-men's shoes.

He did not analyze the feeling, although he was conscious of a disquiet-

ing fear of its effect on Minna herself.

What would she think?

Or would she understand and be glad that his ardor knew a certain restraint?

He compromised upon notes—short, direct little messages written in his best assumption of candor, notes which said nothing and managed to convey the impression of leaving a vast deal unsaid. She did not answer them, but after a week he had a telephone message at second-hand. Minna's maid informed his man that Mrs. Woodhouse would be glad if Mr. Vass could make it convenient to call.

The message startled him, like a sharp and sudden discord against a background of silence. Its word was naturally formal—there was no meat for disquiet in the hackneyed phrases; one does not entrust intimate communications to the intermediacy of two servants. And yet something jarred. He groped for it, clumsily, in a mental darkness.

Always before the briefest word from her had stirred a swift and joyous pang of excitement; when she wrote, it was always to use trite commonplaces of restraint to carry in their simple cipher the things she might have whispered. When she telephoned, it was always to make sure that he himself held the receiver. They had trusted no one, risked nothing.

It had been almost boyishly delightful to Vass, this furtive, restrained, discreet affair, inconceivably more diverting than earlier essays which had yielded a triumph thus far withheld from this. He had kissed her—so rarely that each occasion stood out in his memory like a milestone, every trivial detail of scene and background distinct, as images remembered from lightning-flashes. That was all; Minna had none of a lesser woman's genius for intrigue. She played the game.

It was so obvious that she had in place of a creed that infinitely surer grip upon a code that Vass, veteran of a dozen simpler adventures, instinctively held back, took what she offered and forbore to ask for more. Curiously enough, he had been happy. There was novelty in devotion to an immaculate, unattainable divinity. His conception of Minna was free of all earthly taint . . . cold fire . . . boiling ice . . . living marble . . . changeless and flawless life. . . .

He went to her dutifully, duly angry with himself because the sensation of drawing nearer to her left him, for once, stone-cold, unstirred. .. ..

Why was it that he took no pleasure in the prospect, when, a fortnight since, a summons from her would have set his pulses a-dance and quickened his breath like an ardent boy's?

What had happened to him? He felt that the sight of her, the sound of her voice, the consciousness of her nearness, might revive the old exultance.

He came into the quiet room—the room he had always fancied as part of Minna, with its cool, vague blues and pale silvers—with a flash of hope that it might be so. He had a vivid recollection of her as he had seen her last, stately and still in her mourning, like a lily seen in starlight.

He was prepared to find her in the sombre dress of her estate, prepared to resent this posthumous prolongation of John Woodhouse's ownership. It was a distinct shock to find her in a dress of soft blue, touched with silver, her dark hair smooth above a griefless face. She seemed to understand his surprise, to have anticipated it.

"It would be silly to wear black," she said simply. "For others, perhaps—one clings to conventions stubbornly—but for you—I felt that it would seem an absurd affectation."

The words jarred curiously on him.

"Yes, of course. You would feel so."

He stood uneasily, at a loss for his cue, awkwardly conscious of superfluous hands and feet, of an instant need of speech with no words ready on his lips. An irritation woke in him at the realization of his clumsiness. He wondered whether . . . it was almost with a shrug that he came close and would

have kissed her. She must expect it—but she drew away, quickly, a faint flush staining the clear ivory of her face.

His brows rose interrogatively, although he was conscious of a distinct relief. She laughed uneasily.

"I don't know why—but I know that I didn't want you to—to kiss me. I don't, somehow. I—I can't explain it. I used to want you to—frightfully. That—that was why I dared not let you—but now—" she spread her hands helplessly—"I don't—that's all."

He laughed carelessly.

"We've both come through a sobering experience, you know. Death—somehow it leaves a scar, even when it comes as a release. We're in the shadow of it still—both of us. I think that is the explanation."

She brightened.

"Of course—I didn't see it quite like that. I—I wasn't in the least sorry for—him, you know. I was angry because he couldn't even die—tidily. I tried to be decently sad about it—after all, he'd been good to me, in his way, and of course I knew that I was going to have much to thank him for, and I did my best to feel properly about his dying. But he—he was so uncouth about it. You saw him—you can understand—"

Vass nodded, a sharp picture of the frowsy, shapeless bulk in his disordered bed, of the lank hair and the beard-blotched jowls, contrasting vividly with the half-passionate orderliness of the woman before him, of the room which suited her like the setting of a pure brilliant.

She went on.

"But I can understand, now. It *has* touched me—I didn't realize it until you spoke of it, but there is a shadow. I—I think I should feel better about it if he had managed to die—nicely. It's rather pitiful that he couldn't even have the dignity of death. Naturally I—I felt it, without quite being aware of it."

"I felt it—feel it, too," he said. "I—I had the most curious reluctance about coming to you, today. I—I even thought of inventing an excuse."

"Really?" She laughed. "And I sent for you because I thought you'd wonder why I didn't. I—I hated the idea of your coming."

They laughed in sympathy, and the tension lessened perceptibly.

"Evidently we aren't quite so callous as we thought we were," she said, at length. "We can't—I suppose the phrase is 'make love'—in the lingering shadow of death. Let's not try. Suppose we follow convention—a year isn't too long, is it?"

"A year—!" He caught himself in the midst of a protest as purely mechanical as it was trite.

She laughed as their eyes met and read each other.

"A year it is, Larry. Go somewhere—don't write to me—eliminate yourself from the scheme of things as far as I am concerned. We'll forget, in a year—and remember, too, perhaps."

He left her almost eagerly. The thought of leaving New York for a year seemed, for the first time in his life, almost attractive.

He straightened his shoulders and filled his lungs as he reached the street. A curious sense of relief lightened his mood, the feeling of release remembered from drowsy spring afternoons when school had set him free. He was actually glad to be out of Minna's presence, glad that he had not kissed her. It was inexplicable, but it was true. He did not try to hide it from himself.

Three days later, without having seen her again, he started on a deliberate journey westward, with rambles in Asia pleasantly vague in prospect—a year's respite before he settled down to marriage.

Settled down! The words set his teeth on edge even now. Who was he to face that smug burgher's existence, to invest his life in an experiment which he knew in advance must end in disillusion? Marriage, humdrum and practical, was all very well for the bovine types, for the men who preferred chewing a cud in a quiet, fenced byre to

free forays in untried meadows, to descents, perhaps, upon the forbidden haystacks of alien possession. For him—why he must have been stupefied, narcotized, to have thought of it!

And he had solemnly promised a dying man, as if the obligation of his own unwritten code were not enough; he had tightened the bonds by giving his word. He had, like most unmoral men, a deep hatred of broken faiths and lies.

Priding himself, secretly, on a lofty disdain for circumscribed creeds and kitchen-garden ethics, he was enslaved by laws of his own making, the prisoner of his code.

He began, as the train fled west with him, to realize that the really foot-loose people are they who shuffle off the business of moral bookkeeping upon paid clerks disguised as priests and dismiss the matter from their minds forthwith. The distinction, as he saw it, was analogous to the difference between the private soldier, pent in barbed-wire enclosures and free to find whatever loophole offered, and the officer, unprisoned but bound by a parole in which there could be no gap. He began to envy the greater freedom of narrow views—the attitude which finds no harm in doing anything not expressly forbidden by an inelastic and specific doctrine.

Very naturally, now that he realized the bonds upon him, freedom assumed a subtler charm than ever. Considering himself inextricably entangled in the net of his own silly weaving, he sighed for the foot-loose ramblings of other days. The pasturage beyond the fence was inexpressibly sweetened. Thus, even the casual contact with fellow-travelers cost him a sullen torment of conscious deprivation. There were a dozen women in the diner who, ten days ago, would have failed to attract a second glance, and who now acquired an allure all the more insidious because his tastes told him that he was a blind ass to compare any of them with Minna. He found himself hanging on the bland glances of a ponderous and excessively scented lady of an obvious forty, her wide mouth gleaming with gold-capped molars and a capacious bosom displaying an assortment of trumpery trinkets in a fashion irresistibly reminiscent of a broad counter in a cheap jewelry shop. A snub-nosed flapper, plentifully freckled, who swung her arms and stalked instead of walking, a fading spinster, unconsciously wistful, persistently uneasy about time-tables, a trimly garbed, capped and aproned English nursemaid in attendance on a pair of noisy children—he fumed at the discovery that his mind strayed rebelliously toward each of them.

He did not linger in San Francisco. There were too many women to be seen on the streets, at the theaters, in the lobby and corridors of his hotel. He was relieved to find most of his fellow-passengers of his own sex, and, by carefully sticking to the safety of the smoking-room, and refusing to go ashore at Honolulu, he managed to compromise with his stubborn folly. But, as the days passed and the distance lengthened, he discovered a dawning hostility toward Minna, a positive resentment which replaced the negative attitude of his earlier state. He began to hate her . . . but the code held. He simply could not default. . . .

III

He reappeared after a long submergence in the hinterland of China, a joyous interlude of peace, untroubled by the sight and speech of women recognizable as such. It was time to start back; his year of respite neared its end. He felt his hatred growing in him as the propeller throbbed; the jolt and clank of the rail journey irritated him as if their noise taunted him with approaching degradation.

Twice he went so far as to leave the train, desperately resolved to keep his freedom even at the price of dishonoring his relentless code. Each attempt found him helplessly resuming the journey in a few hours. He wanted to play the cad—wanted it madly, and discovered that he lacked force to do it.

He waited in Minna's little reception-

room with something of the mental torment of the convicted prisoner facing sentence.

His eyes clung to the door by which she must presently enter, to be kissed and endeared . . . he would have to put his arms around her and pretend to be desperately happy . . . lies . . . lies . . . as long as they both should live. . . .

She came in with a curious air of reluctance, a kind of bashfulness which sat strangely on her. She was awkward, he thought, sullenly, even as he sprang to his feet with a passable counterfeit of eagerness. And she was lank, shapeless, flat—how could he ever have thought that spindling body beautiful? Pale, too—sallow, even. She would be sick a good deal, probably, a querulous, whining hypochondriac, to be waited on and comforted. . . .

She avoided his kiss.

"No, Larry—I—I don't know how to tell you—I—I—I just can't go on with it—I'd have written you if you had left any address . . . I can't do it—"

He felt a quick throb of passionate rejoicing.

She was giving him back his freedom just as the barred gates swung inward on him!

The thing was incredible—his eyes widened, his face, stunned by the shock, was blank and questioning.

Minna flushed, as under a reproach.

"I know it's contemptible—but I can't help it. I've just stopped wanting you, Larry. I—I never want anything that's in reach—they used to tell about my screaming frantically as a three-year-old, because my father wouldn't get me the moon to play with. If he had given it to me I shouldn't have been interested for a minute. I—as long as you were on the other side of the wall I wanted you terribly—oh, I did, I did, Larry! I was mad for you—until I—until I found myself facing something like compulsion to—to take you. Then—" she spread her hands in the old, eloquent gesture he remembered. "I never told you, but John—" she colored faintly and her eyes wavered—"John knew—about us. He—he hid it well, didn't he? But he knew, all along. And he—he made me promise him that I'd—I'd marry you if you wanted me. I almost laughed at him it was so whimsical—asking me to do what I'd been eating out my heart to do! But I promised, soberly enough. It—it seemed to please him. I never quite did him justice, Larry—he was above jealousy, anyway—he was too big to resent the thought of—of giving me up to you. But he didn't understand me, I've discovered, or he'd have made me promise never to speak to you again. . . ."

Vass rose to the occasion. He managed to look suitably dashed, without reproaching Minna for feminine inconstancy with an excess of mournfulness in tone or eye. He made a pretty little speech, to the general effect that even more than he wanted *her,* he desired her happiness. He hoped that she'd find the answer to her problems—and, of course, he would always be—her friend. It was a trite theme, but Lawrence Vass was one of the men who are at their best when they mouth platitudes.

Somehow he got away, possessed by a persistent impulse to pause on the wide flags before the door and indulge in a hop-and-skip of triumph. He was free again—gloriously free to go and come as seemed good, to love where he would. . . . He walked briskly toward the Avenue, bent on renewing associations with the men at his pet club in a kind of discreet celebration of his escape.

The Avenue was brilliant, from a little distance, with the afternoon parade. His step quickened, his shoulders went back and his chin up; he was agreeably conscious of his clothes, of the perfect barbering and manicuring which, an hour or two ago, had reminded him dismally of the final attentions to the person of the condemned.

He swung into the long, sun-bathed, glistening street with a bit of a swagger and a roving eye.

Two stumpy girls, their beefy ankles

challenging the eye with slightly-soiled white leather, their adipose encased in the extreme of the moment's exaggerated mode, regarded him with frank and horrible approval. He drew a little to one side as he passed them . . . a monstrous woman, quivering gelatinously at every absurd step, minced behind them, seemingly uncrushed by any consciousness of a large mole cuddled between cheek and nostril. A whiff of dry goods store perfume assailed the nostril as she passed. . . . After her a procession of women, big women and skimp, women bleached to limit of visibility and women tinted a deep and muddly olive, women badly dressed and women dressed a little worse, girls with flip, stupid faces and high, noisy voices, swollen dowagers puffing north and flop-hatted shop-girls trying to look like chorus maidens . . . here and there a girl who pleased the eye, but as Vass let his glance loiter, stirred no hint of curiosity, awoke no touch of interest.

What was the matter with New York? He had dreamed of the Avenue, lying on bare ground under Thibetan stars . . . and he came back to —this!

He avoided the front windows of the club. He felt that he had seen enough.

IV

It was nearly a year later that enlightenment began to come to him. He read of Minna's engagement to Jeremy Catlin with a queer reviving of his old attachment. He wrote her his sentiments with a feeling of insincerity. He did not want her to be happy—with Catlin. But he said he did very prettily, and she thanked him, in a note that quickened his pulses as he tore the thick cover, a note he crumpled and dropped in the basket only to rescue and smooth and treasure it.

He saw her, now and then, in company, and revised his opinion of her looks. She was lovely—he wondered dully that he had ever been able to doubt it.

He stayed away from the wedding, observing his watch and harboring melancholy reflections as he pictured the ceremony. He felt, now, like a man who emerges from an evil dream to face a reality rather more evil. He could not understand himself. He wanted Minna again—wanted her as badly as he had wanted her when only John Woodhouse stood between . . . and yet he had snatched at the chance of escape as eagerly as if she had been Medusa herself.

His mind reverted illogically to his last sight of Woodhouse, uncouth and absurd against the white satin pillow. The grey, frozen lips grinned at him . . . a grim, understanding smile of triumph, the smile of the man who has had his way unsuspected of his victim.

Suddenly Vass saw why Woodhouse had smiled . . . Minna's plaint . . . "He ought to have made me promise never to see you" . . . of course! If John Woodhouse had wanted her to marry Lawrence Vass, that would have been exactly what, knowing Minna as he knew her, he would have done. No wonder he had laughed, hugging his joke as he lay there against the satin, with the hideous flowers accenting his drab, bleak unloveliness!

Lawrence Vass sat very still for a long time. His watch lay in his hand, unheeded. He glanced at it, at last. The hands pointed to ten minutes past noon. He sat up suddenly, his face lighting. Minna was married by this time. She would never be uninteresting again—nor unforbidden!

Lawrence Vass chuckled and rang the bell. No matter what happened to Jeremy Catlin—there would always be somebody to marry Minna.

Vass drank, happily.

THE REASON*

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By George Middleton

CAST

LOCKSLEY RANDOLPH, a retired merchant.
PAULA, his daughter.
TOM SABINE, his Secretary.
MARY SABINE, Tom's wife.

SCENE: *Sitting room at the Randolph Lodge in a suburb of the city; an early winter night.*

A handsomely furnished sitting room, the general entrance of which from the floor below is at the right. Beyond this a broad window is seen as the moonlight faintly filters through the trees outside. Directly opposite, some smoldering logs betray a fireplace, near which is another door opening into PAULA'S *apartments. Large double doors in the center open into a hallway leading to the library. A telephone is on a large writing table, upon which a light, with a luxurious shade suspended above, casts a strong yellow glow. The furnishings show signs of tasteless wealth and are devoid of any feminine touch.*

SABINE *and* RANDOLPH *are discovered bending over some documents.* SABINE *is about thirty-three, clean shaven with shrewd eyes and a conspicuously insinuating smile. The manner with which he feels for his words and his studied coolness suggests a deep and significant interest in the developments.* RANDOLPH *is fifty, well-preserved and possessing the assurance of permanent prosperity: he is apparently without illusions as the lines about his slightly protruding eyes and thick lips indicate a highly colored life. Though the two men are obviously considerate, there is concealed an instinctive mistrust. They are silent a long while until Randolph looks up from the papers.*

SABINE:

Anything else?

RANDOLPH:

How long will those compilations take?

SABINE:

Same as the others.

RANDOLPH:

A month each, eh? You've done—let's see—

SABINE:

I've been your Secretary for three months.

RANDOLPH:

And you've been at these every evening—ever since I took you in.

SABINE:

I'd hardly describe it that way.

RANDOLPH:

You are sure you can still find all you need in my own library here?

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SABINE:

All I need—behind the closed doors.

RANDOLPH:

(*Casually.*) I shall see that my orders not to disturb you are continued.

SABINE:

I've noticed you never even come yourself.

RANDOLPH:

I like to think of young genius being left alone.

SABINE:

(*Mock seriously.*) And out of harm's way?

RANDOLPH:

Exactly—at night. (*Half to himself.*) Another month will about finish it.

SABINE:

(*Significantly.*) Mr. Randolph, you are paying rather high for—

RANDOLPH:

(*Eyeing him quickly.*) For what?

SABINE:

(*Fumbling the pages casually.*) Unremunerative work.

RANDOLPH:

One never pays too high for what one wants.

SABINE:

Not at the time.

[*They look at each other:* SABINE *slowly gathers the papers together and glances toward* RANDOLPH *who is coolly staring before him. This is played very quietly. Then* SABINE *turns, goes and opens the door at Center, which he leaves open as he casually steps back.*]

Your daughter. (*Calmly to* PAULA.) Your father is here, Miss Randolph.

[PAULA *enters with a book in hand. She is twenty-three and charming, with a sweet innocent air which suggests a hedged-in life and little knowledge of what lies over the border. She is dressed in a simple tea-gown and her manner throughout is calm and unsophisticated.*]

PAULA:

Good evening, Mr. Sabine. Father—

RANDOLPH:

Where have you been, Paula?

PAULA:

Getting a book.

RANDOLPH:

You mustn't read so much.

SABINE:

Anything further, Mr. Randolph, before you go out?

RANDOLPH:

No. But—but I don't remember mentioning that I was going out.

SABINE:

I thought you did. Good evening.

PAULA:

(*Good-naturedly.*) Is Mrs. Sabine well?

SABINE:

Not exactly.

RANDOLPH:

Indeed?

SABINE:

My wife seemed upset about something. (*He smiles.*)

RANDOLPH:

(*Casually.*) Why, she seemed well when she was here last, didn't she, Paula?

PAULA:

Yes, and so happy.

RANDOLPH:

What's the trouble?

SABINE:

I'm not quite sure—*yet.*

RANDOLPH:

Perhaps she needs a change.

SABINE:

I'll tell her you asked after her, Mr. Randolph.

RANDOLPH:

Certainly. Do. But it was *Miss* Randolph who inquired.

SABINE:

I thought it was you. (*He smiles.*) The air in the library has affected me. (*He smiles.*) Good evening.

[*He exits Center slowly closing the door. There is a pause as* PAULA *looks curiously before her, while* RANDOLPH, *somewhat puzzled, goes up to door and sees* SABINE *has gone into the library beyond.*]

PAULA:

I hope it's nothing serious.

RANDOLPH:

What?

PAULA:

Mrs. Sabine.

RANDOLPH:

Nothing, of course.

PAULA:

Hasn't she told *you?*

RANDOLPH:

Me?

PAULA:

You're such good friends.

RANDOLPH:

Women, my dear, with attractive husbands never confide in outsiders.

PAULA:

(*Innocently.*) Don't they?

RANDOLPH:

(*Laughing.*) You know so little of life, dear. (PAULA *nods.*) And I wish you to keep your sweetness until you are married.

PAULA:

Doesn't one need it then?

RANDOLPH:

You'll understand when the time comes, child.

PAULA:

(*Enigmatically.*) And one mustn't before!

RANDOLPH:

Children don't realize how they unconsciously hold parents to higher things: it's because of you, for instance, more than anything else since your dear mother died, that I've tried to keep *my* life an example.

PAULA:

I've always had it before me, father. (*Coming closer.*) I'm deeply grateful for showing me what I, too, should be.

RANDOLPH:

Yes, yes. (*Patting her.*) Now, dear, run along to bed: your eyes are tired.

PAULA:

(*Glancing at book.*) I'm fond of reading.

RANDOLPH:

(*Humoring her throughout.*) What do you like best?

PAULA:

(*Cheerfully.*) Adventure.

RANDOLPH:

With real heroes?

PAULA:

(*Referring to book.*) I love those who keep cool in times of danger.

RANDOLPH:

You're only a child, after all, eh? (*He pats her tenderly as she notices him glancing at his watch.*)

PAULA:

(*Casually.*) You *are* going out?

RANDOLPH:

Yes: Some business.

PAULA:

Will you be late?

RANDOLPH:

Do I disturb you?

PAULA:

I can generally hear the machine from

my window, before you turn up the path.

RANDOLPH:

It's not hard nowadays to go fast in the dark.

PAULA:

You will always "toot" the horn? (*Reprovingly.*) Think of the danger.

RANDOLPH:

Foolish girl! There's no danger about here.

PAULA:

No, of course not. (*Goes to him.*) Good night.

RANDOLPH:

Dear, dear, girl. (*Looking at her.*) It's good to have such a daughter.

PAULA:

And such a father. (*They kiss; the telephone rings.*) Oh, let me. (*She goes to 'phone.*) Good evening, Mrs. Sabine. (RANDOLPH *starts a bit, unnoticed.*) I thought you were ill. Mr. Sabine was telling father. I believe he's in the library. Father will take the message: he's here. Do take care of yourself: just think what Mr. Sabine would do if you were ill. Good night. [*She hands receiver to father, who half pauses, thinking she will leave the room, but she lingers over her book.*]

RANDOLPH:

Good evening. (*Half pointedly.*) Yes, my daughter is here. Anything I can do? Do you want my advice? Oh, whatever is wisest. Of course I'll tell Mr. Sabine. I hope it's nothing serious. (*He hangs up receiver, concealing from* PAULA *his displeasure.*)

PAULA:

She seemed excited.

RANDOLPH:

Woman's nerves.

PAULA:

Funny I never have them.

RANDOLPH:

You're not married.

PAULA:

You're going to see her?

RANDOLPH:

She's on her way here.

PAULA:

Here? Then you will tell Mr. Sabine?

RANDOLPH:

Yes. But you're tired, dear.

PAULA:

I'll feel better with my things off. Good night. (*She pauses at her door.*) Father, she and Mr. Sabine are happily married, aren't they?

RANDOLPH:

Of course, of course.

PAULA:

I'm glad to hear so.

RANDOLPH:

Why?

PAULA:

(*Glancing at him.*) Then it couldn't be about *that.*

[*She closes the door softly.* RANDOLPH *looks after her puzzled, then walks up and down alone a few seconds, very much irritated. Finally goes to the phone, obviously switching it.*]

RANDOLPH:

Is that you, Sabine? You've found what you want? You won't need me any more? Well, stick close to it. I just wished to see. Good night. (*He switches it off again and waits.*) Is that you, Brooks? Tell Toder to have the car ready. I may need it later. No, the closed car—it's chilly. Oh, by the way, (*slowly*) in case *I* should be out, Mr. Sabine is expecting Mrs. Sabine. Let her come right up. What's that? You think you see her? (*Showing displeasure.*) Then I'll tell him myself. *Yes,* better let her come up. That'll be all for to-night.

[*He hangs up the receiver, walks up and down again and finally goes to door*

Right and leaves it open. There is quite a pause as he stands waiting, smoking a cigarette. Finally, MRS. SABINE *enters, leaving the door open. She is in her late twenties, of rather restless beauty, which under her shifting expression becomes hard and cynical. She apparently has little resistance and suggests a love of excitement and sensation. Her manner is flighty with an underlying worldliness. She is handsomely dressed, with beautiful furs upon her sensuous shoulders.*]

(*Abruptly.*) What the devil does this mean?

MRS. SABINE:

We're alone?

RANDOLPH:

Naturally.

MRS. SABINE:

(*Half flippantly.*) I had to see you.

RANDOLPH:

Why here?

MRS. SABINE:

I couldn't wait till you came to me.

RANDOLPH:

(*With strained jocularity.*) Feather brain; what's the trouble?

MRS. SABINE:

Nothing—only my husband *knows.*

RANDOLPH:

(*Quickly.*) About us?

MRS. SABINE:

He's known for some time.

RANDOLPH:

And he only spoke—?

MRS. SABINE:

Today.

RANDOLPH:

The devil! (*Slowly.*) What's the reason?

MRS. SABINE:

Why he kept silent? (*Shrugging shoulders.*) You men always have reasons.

RANDOLPH:

What did he say?

MRS. SABINE:

(*Laughing cynically.*) He smiled. It was so funny and so unexpected.

RANDOLPH:

(*Incredulously.*) He didn't make a scene?

MRS. SABINE:

No. And I'd been rehearsing for weeks what I should say.

RANDOLPH:

(*Halted.*) But didn't he—

MRS. SABINE:

(*Bitterly.*) I tell you he didn't even insult me!

RANDOLPH:

Sh! (*He looks toward daughter's door and then crosses and closes door at Right through which* MRS. SABINE *has entered.*)

MRS. SABINE:

(*After she has watched him.*) Hasn't he spoken to you?

RANDOLPH:

Not yet.

MRS. SABINE:

(*Bitterly.*) That's like him. He said he'd wait till I broke the news to you.

RANDOLPH:

And then?

MRS. SABINE:

Then he said you would want to see him and (*ominously*) he'd do some talking.

RANDOLPH:

(*Recalling.*) So that's why he smiled.

MRS. SABINE:

He merely put his hands on your

furs. I thought he'd believe I'd saved enough to buy them myself. He stroked them once or twice—and smiled. But he said nothing. Then he led me to the window and pointed to your car—the extra one you forced upon *us*—when you began. He smiled. He picked up a book: the work in the library was interesting—it kept him *safe* in the long winter evenings. I tell you he said it all in his smiles and never a word. (*Violently.*) God! he disappointed me so! I'd be sorry for him a little if he'd only struck me. (RANDOLPH *trying to quiet her.*) Oh, I hate him with his penny a year. I married him because I was lonely and curious. That's what most of us marry for: but I'd have made him a good wife if I'd had some decent clothes to wear. I hate him for asking me to marry him—and then not even striking me when he found out what I was!

RANDOLPH:

But didn't you even deny it?

MRS. SABINE:

(*Defiantly.*) Why should I?

RANDOLPH:

(*Cynically.*) A woman always confesses to some one.

MRS. SABINE:

(*Quickly.*) What did you want me to do? Think of you? I was sick of him. When I saw he wasn't going to make a fuss, I didn't think your reputation would suffer, so I didn't care about protecting myself. What's the difference anyhow? He can't give me what I want: you can. If we can only keep it quiet, nobody need know—and it wouldn't even reach your daughter's ears.

RANDOLPH:

(*Angrily.*) We'll not discuss her.

MRS. SABINE:

No, she's a good woman—with her lily hands and her thin eyebrows. What does she know of life—the sordid soapy hours ending with the snore of a husband you hate in a bed that rolls him against you. Ugh! (*He walks up and down, irritated.*) Well, then, what are we going to do to keep it from her?

RANDOLPH:

That will depend on your husband and whether he'll be sensible. (*He goes to 'phone, switching it.*)

MRS. SABINE:

(*Looking before her.*) You did it beautifully and with such knowledge of me and my kind. But don't take too much credit. I'd have done it with *any* man who offered me what you did—if he'd come at the right time, as you did, and found me at the end of a trolley line like this.

RANDOLPH:

(*At 'phone.*) Step here a moment, Sabine. Yes: your wife is here. (*Cynically.*) She said you'd be expecting her. (*He hangs up the receiver.*)

MRS. SABINE:

(*Without self-delusion.*) Where else could I come but to you? He couldn't hold me: I'm the sort that needs a diamond-studded clasp to keep her morals fastened on.

RANDOLPH:

I think Sabine and I can make some arrangement.

MRS. SABINE:

Let's be comfortable, that's all I say. I'm so tired of making my lies fit. I'm willing to keep on with it. Why not? It's all so easy with a woman once she's slipped. Lots of us would be what I am if they could find a man to go through the marriage ceremony with them *first.*

[*A knock is heard at the door—it seems almost sarcastic, as it waits for a reply.*]

RANDOLPH:

Come in.

[*The door opens softly and* SABINE *enters slowly and comes down to them with the same smile. There is a pause.* MRS. SABINE *remains tense and seated.*]

Have a cigarette?

SABINE:

Thanks. (*They eye each other as they light up.*)

RANDOLPH:

(*Coming to the point.*) You know.

SABINE:

(*Puffing throughout.*) Yes.

RANDOLPH:

Well?

SABINE:

I repeat the word—well?

RANDOLPH:

You will come to an understanding?

SABINE:

Which means?

RANDOLPH:

You are—shall I say agreeable?

SABINE:

You love my wife?

RANDOLPH:

(*Courteously.*) Of course.

SABINE:

And you, Mary?

MRS. SABINE:

Would a woman do what I've done without it?

SABINE:

Never. (He *pauses.*)

RANDOLPH:

Speak.

SABINE:

(*Casually.*) It seems very simple.

RANDOLPH:

Which means?

SABINE:

That I'd still like to complete the compilations in your library.

MRS. SABINE:

(*Arising, astonished.*) You're even willing to stay *here?* (*He bows.*)

RANDOLPH:

(*Quickly.*) And—and live ostensibly at home—with your wife?

SABINE:

Why not? I have no place else to go and she merely wishes to be comfortable.

RANDOLPH:

You will not make a fuss?

SABINE:

I'm sorry to disappoint my wife.

RANDOLPH:

You will not let my daughter discover?

SABINE:

No. I consider your position embarrassing enough.

RANDOLPH:

(*Eyeing him.*) So your wife is worth nothing to you?

SABINE:

(*Quickly.*) You're mistaken there.

MRS. SABINE:

Thanks. But how?

SABINE:

Protection.

MRS. SABINE:

Against what?

SABINE:

Against Mr. Randolph.

RANDOLPH:

Me?

SABINE:

Exactly.

RANDOLPH:

What the devil are you driving at?

SABINE:

Perhaps if I take it kindly now, you will not blame *me*—in the future.

MRS. SABINE:

Oh, I know we'll get tired of each other if that's what you're suggesting.

SABINE:

(*Detecting an agreeing look in* RAN-

DOLPH'S *face.*) That *may* be what I mean. (*Eyeing* RANDOLPH *keenly as she bites her lips.*) If that's all, I'll return to the library.

RANDOLPH:

Have you no suggestions?

SABINE:

(*Coldly.*) Be careful not to make a fool of me—in public.

MRS. SABINE:

There speaks the man.

RANDOLPH:

Then you'll be silent?

SABINE:

Until—

RANDOLPH:

Until?

SABINE:

Until you get your deserts.

RANDOLPH:

A threat?

SABINE:

(*Smiling.*) No. Only I know my wife.

MRS. SABINE:

And that's the sort of man I married. (*To Sabine.*) Do you blame me for throwing you over?

SABINE:

Have I?

MRS. SABINE:

(*Indignantly.*) How dared you open me to this?

RANDOLPH:

Don't blame him, Mary. (*Sabine smiles.*)

MRS. SABINE:

(*Indignantly.*) You knew, and you let him steal your wife.

SABINE:

Some men like their women that way.

MRS. SABINE:

Isn't it funny! It's losing its romance—being handed over like some food at supper. Isn't it funny—and disappointing.

RANDOLPH:

I can't say I admire you, Sabine.

SABINE:

No, you can't. But you will when you know my wife better.

MRS. SABINE:

(*Losing control.*) I'm more ashamed of you than I am of myself. Why didn't you stop me if you knew? What's the reason? Why didn't you strike me? Why didn't you, so I could feel you and I were quits? Why didn't you—like that and that. (*She strikes him furiously with her gloves once or twice, but he continues smiling.*)

RANDOLPH:

Mary, don't let's have a scene. Sh!

MRS. SABINE:

I wanted a scene! And to think I wasn't even worth insulting!

[*She goes out quickly Right, leaving door open. She has dropped her glove and as* RANDOLPH, *with a resigned, half-bored air, starts to follow her,* SABINE *stoops, picks up the glove and, smiling, halts* RANDOLPH.]

SABINE:

My wife dropped her glove. Will you take it to her? I have my work, and, as you remarked, another month will about finish it.

RANDOLPH:

(*Smiling in spite of himself.*) Life would be so much simpler if all husbands were so considerate.

SABINE:

The spice would be gone.

RANDOLPH:

I suppose she is waiting—

SABINE:

—for the glove. (*Offering it to him.*)

RANDOLPH:

(*Taking it.*) Yes: the glove.

SABINE:

I'm glad you will drive in the closed car.

RANDOLPH:

(*At the door.*) Our reputations must be protected.

SABINE:

No man likes to be made a fool of.

RANDOLPH:

(*Slowly.*) After all, she's only a woman and they're all alike, eh?

SABINE:

(*Slowly.*) *All* alike. Yes. (*He smiles.*)

RANDOLPH:

(*Casually.*) You'll find the cigarettes on the table.

SABINE:

Thanks.

[RANDOLPH *exits, closing the door.* SABINE *stands a moment, then turns and goes to the window and looks off and indicates that he sees the car has driven away. Then his manner changes, he sighs deeply and goes slowly toward the door Left. He turns down the light and then knocks on* PAULA'S *door. He repeats this.*]

Paula! Paula! (*He stands waiting a reply.*)

(*A slow curtain.*)

STARS

By Orrick Johns

SOME day I will bring to you my basketful of stars,
I will come and pray your hands to keep them;
You will never turn away, nor think the thing that mars;
You will look and laugh at them, and reap them.

You will say, "We'll not go yet, for else we may recall
The green upon the branches and the brown leaves scattered,
And how the clouds are whiter there than any clouds at all—
I think your stars are nice and I am flattered."

And you will let me have your hand the while that we are there,
And you will let me have your mouth no knowing;
And we will watch the other stars with old leaves in our hair,
And the swallows back and forth between them going.

WHEN a man ceases to say charming things to his wife, it is a good sign that he has begun to think them—but not about his wife.

ONE of the sweetest pleasures of a woman is to fill a man with regret.

THE MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD WOMEN

By Elsie McCormick

"IS there a man on earth who understands women?" I exclaimed one day, while Worldly Wisdom was having tea with me.

"There is one," answered Worldly Wisdom. "I will take you to him."

And we went.

After a long, tedious journey, Worldly Wisdom pointed out a man who was grubbing for roots under a tree.

"There is the one who understands women," he said.

"But he is blind," I remarked, after I had vainly tried to engage the man in conversation.

"He is not misled by their beauty."

"And he is deaf."

"He is not deceived by the soft sounds they utter."

"Besides, he does not seem to be especially wise."

"He has no imagination to dazzle him and no theories to lead him astray."

"And why in the world does he live by himself in this dense wood?"

"Did I not tell you that he understood women?" answered Worldly Wisdom.

A COLOUR STUDY

By Arthur Fitzgerald

HER rooms were toneless gray, with vague, blue hangings and dull rose cushions, and furniture that was cold and without gloss.

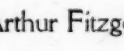
The pictures were of Greuze—*sans* soul, *sans* colour, *sans* warmth . . . . and few.

There were shallow bowls of purple flowers with heavy fragrance.

She wore a cheerless gray gown that clung and made no sound as her body moved.

A splash of bright colour was needed to relieve the drabness. . . . .

As I drew my knife from her throat the bright red blade made the rooms quite beautiful.



THE burdens of marriage are so heavy that it often takes three to carry them.

THE CONSTANT PILGRIM

By Wyndham Martyn

HEATH admitted readily that the incident of the charming, veiled woman puzzled him more than any adventure he had yet experienced. He talked of it incessantly. He elaborated obscure psychological theories to account for it and as he uttered them knew the real reason was yet to seek.

Heath was at an age some years removed from the time when he attracted young girls, and almost as many distant from the inevitable epoch when they would spell for him all that the world could show him of feminine allurement. A woman of thirty represented to him all the high and sweet dangers of women.

It was a woman of thirty whom he had met in a country lane, her car filled with lilac blooms and her eyes with a witchery that still held him in thrall. He gave a dinner in his superbly fitted house and devoted every course to a consideration of the matter.

"You know," said Heath, "that the physicians I engage to conserve my well-being have prescribed walking for me. If there is any more useless, tedious or grotesque method of wasting time and vitality, I am not acquainted with it. Still, these men are specialists in their way. They have told me appalling and immodest things about my liver. I must walk to live, they declare. I must do so many miles a day. I have rediscovered Greater New York in the last three months and perspired thirty pounds of myself among her suburbs. A month ago today I was making my unhappy way from Alpine to the ferry at Edgewater. I took no pleasure in the pilgrimage. My feet sought to burst their bondage. My collar grew smaller with every mile I trudged. Insolent motorists were filled with a zeal to drive me into the gutters when they passed. It was the first hot day of the year.

"I had taken pleasure in nothing the livelong day until I came upon a group of children surrounding a Rudge-Whitworth car. There was a woman in it. The fact that I am unable to describe what she wore shows how enormously I was attracted. As a rule I am a joy to my sisters because I can tell them what the women they hate are wearing. I only saw that she was thirty and beautiful. Even her features and coloring escape me because of the joy I felt at her exquisite, radiant charm. She was smiling at children who did not merit another look. They were crowding about her car trying to sell her yesterday's lilac at tomorrow's prices. She showered silver upon them regally.

"The heat had made me almost faint—a damnable diet goes with this exercise of mine—and I stood in the shade watching her. Of course she saw me. She knew I was not a yokel of Edgewater or Fort Lee or whatever the child-infested hamlet was named. I could see she was interested. I caught her turning the smile that had come to her face, when she perceived my scrutiny, into a laugh that was used to reward a towheaded boy. There was no possible way for me to introduce myself. As you all know I detest small unwashed children. Some of you might have essayed to join the group with jest and quip. I could not. I am not the kind of man who can wear a red costume at Christmas time, contrive

a beard out of cotton, and masquerade as Santa Claus.

"In my unusual confusion I overlooked many opportunities. I might have asked her the time or the direction in which Hackensack lay. I might have fainted at her car's side and been carried by her to a hospital. All my readiness and address had vanished. I pulled myself together and resumed my tramp. The children who had seen the silver shower cease at my coming shouted opprobrious things at me as I went.

"I had gone a mile along the road when she passed me in her big noiseless car. I thought I was justified in raising my hat as she went by. I do that sort of thing rather well. There was no atom of overconfidence in my manner. A woman of the world, as she was, would understand where another might think it unwarranted. She was driving fast and made no answering gesture.

"A half mile further on I saw the car was drawn up to the side of the road and she was peering into the machinery. I know as little about the inside of automobiles as I do about children. But it was my opportunity. I could at least murmur sympathetic remarks about carburetors and I called to mind that whenever anything goes wrong with my own cars they call it ignition trouble.

" 'I hope I may be allowed to help you,' " I said.

"She was one of those slim women of thirty who have left the gaucheries of girlhood behind and acquired none of the laboured fascinations of middle age. Amethyst eyes have the strange power to set my heart beating in a most singular fashion. I felt in that moment I would gladly have smeared myself with the oils that exude from the gears if I could win such a smile as she had thrown to those abominable children. I admit I fear to crank a car; yet I offered my services. A self-starter would be more efficient than I, she said.

"Suddenly the slumbering beats in the cylinders awoke. She had pressed the right button or trodden on the right pedal. I had been in her company not two minutes. I have decided that if a similar opportunity comes to me again I shall plunge a penknife into a tire.

"I could see that she was making up her mind to ask if I wanted to ride to the ferry. There was a certain rather charming diffidence about it. It was not a case where she had to deal with children, but with a man of the world who had shed his scruples with his college years. I have a way of looking at a woman who attracts me that has a certain challenging air with it. Such silent conversations as these, lovemaking in quartertones so to say, are very useful. No one can pretend to be offended by what has not been uttered.

" 'The day is so hot,' she said, 'that you may like to ride.'

"She looked at me with a curious intentness.

" 'Do you live in New York?'

"There was relief in her face when I admitted it. She was already planning some intrigue or other, I could swear. She drove like the wind; we were on board the dismal craft in a few seconds, it seemed. Fortunately we were in the middle of the line of vehicles. I was alone with her. Obviously it was an opportunity not to miss. She responded very little, but there was a curious look in those unfathomable amethyst eyes that set me to thinking of my vanished youth. She was too clever to say very much. I could see she was putting me in the balance with some other man and weighing us. Was it a lover or a husband, I wondered. Those accursed ferry-boats travel like ocean liners. We had crossed at a dangerous rate. I had hardly heard her say a score of words.

"Just outside the ferry was a little flower store. I could see she looked longingly at some red roses.

" 'Stop,' I said, and touched her firm white arm, 'I'm going to fill the tonneau with them if you will smile at me as you did at those children.'

"For the first time she smiled radiantly.

" 'Who knows?' she said softly. 'Perhaps I will.' "

Heath sighed.

"Now comes the inexplicable part of

it. When I came out of the store, staggering under my burden of red roses, she was gone. There was no sign of her at all. It was as if she had not been. What answer have you for that? I'll anticipate you. I have thought of everything you can suggest and it will be wrong. Here is what I feel is the solution. You must grant that the stoppage of the Rudge-Whitworth was a mere *ruse de guerre*. She wanted to know me. It was a pleasant way to accomplish the purpose."

"But why did she leave you like that?" asked a guest.

"I have eliminated all but two reasons," his host remarked. "One is that on the New York side she met a friend, lover or husband, and feared to be recognized with me. I should be an incident not easily explained. Personally I prefer the other and more subtle explanation. Now and again every woman becomes the victim to conventional proprieties. Women, too, see farther into the future than we men can. She may have had a dread of what the affair might lead to if pursued. I think she was for the moment panic-stricken and is now repenting her haste. As for me, I have the tireless, patient ways of the true hunter. My exercise now is always along that river road. I have even cultivated those obnoxious children. They shriek with delight when they see me because they know my pockets groan under the burden of the nickels I have carried for them. Some day, long distant perhaps, or no farther away than tomorrow, that softly gliding car will pause at my side and I shall find my way to Paradise."

"You certainly know women," said another guest admiringly.

"I have no other hobby," Heath admitted.

II

PART of a letter written by Mrs. Stuyvesant Yarrington to a friend:

My dear Christine:

Dozens of people have written to me joking me for being arrested for speeding on Riverside Drive. They were all sermons with "I told you so!" for their texts. They all knew that I had sworn never again to exceed the speed limit.

I'm going to tell you the truth, so that you may agree that the thing was really justifiable. It was the day that I went over to lunch with the Crayfords at Tenafly. I stayed later and wanted to be back at a tea not later than half past five. Coming home by the road under the Palisades I stopped to buy lilacs from some perfectly adorable children. While I was doing so a man walked by and leaned against a tree to watch us. I mean to watch me. A middle-aged man he was, the wreck possibly of a handsome man but now wholly uninteresting.

He wasn't a native, one could see that by his clothes. He had a certain air with him that was born, probably, of success with women. Until his eyes fell on me his gaze wore a suffering, bored expression as though his smart shoes hurt and his collar strangled. When he saw me he straightened up and assumed a debonair and almost jaunty manner. But he saw that I was not to be led into a flirtation and limped off.

Presently I saw it was growing late and that I had barely time to make the boat. Then I made the horrifying discovery that I had given all my money to the children. Literally I was penniless. As I drove to the ferry I passed the man again. It was then that I had my inspiration.

I pulled up by the roadside and pretended to have engine trouble. The man hurried toward me and proffered aid and made fatuous remarks about ignition. Then, when the engine started, I thanked him prettily and offered to set him down on the New York side. You see, mine is a car with a left-hand drive and the collector at the ferry is on the right-hand side. My new man paid as a matter of course. On the way over he made love in a super-sophisticated manner, a little too boldly for so brief an acquaintance, but of course he thought with a male's vanity that I was taken by his beaux yeux.

You know, Christine, that no more

jealous husband exists than mine. I have often wondered why unfaithful lords harbour suspicions when really decent husbands don't. And just now he is particularly sensitive. I made up my mind I must get rid of my passenger.

There is a little flower store near the ferry on the city side. There were hundreds of red, red roses. He said they were the colour of my lips and he wished he might find out if they were as soft and velvety. I told him the best thing to do would be to buy some.

Directly he had disappeared I shot up the steep incline to the Drive and was arrested by Grant's Tomb. Next time my license is to be revoked. I feel it wasn't quite fair to the man, somehow, but I've given him something to think about. All the same, when I next go to the Crayfords', I shall choose another road.

REVERIE

By Lucie Lacoste

I

SWEPT by the winds of time, events like an open sea stretch between you and me.

And I—as one who stands upon a vast prairie enveloped by the purple blue of a starless sky—laugh softly, for—have you not written your smile in my heart, where I alone can see it.

II

At twilight on the beach—I play with the little self of you that might have been—your smaller shadow.

Slowly against the gray sands there forms in shadowy outline a frailer you—tinier shoulders, fragile limbs—and laughing eyes.

Your smaller shadow.

I put out my hand eager to caress it,

It vanishes—

I wipe a tear away

And watch the tinier ripples race the huge breakers to the shore.

III

Head bowed low I weep, I weep.

For the days that were yours were mine—when your smile like the stars lit the life of my heart—

Now I watch the light from my cigarette gleam as a yellow topaz in a darkened room—my eyes linger over the leopard rug—and I write your name in smoke.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

By Maurice Joy

THE twin gods, Gloom and Cowardice, sat on their haunches in the lowest pit of hell and began to cackle. Through a hole in the roof their cackle escaped until it came to the ears of Laughter who was seated on his own particular throne in Heaven, directly above them, and Laughter at once guessed the reason—

"They think they're going to get the soul of my dear follower," he said. "I must go to Destiny and plead for him."

But as he tripped his way towards the greatest of the gods, Morality stepped in before him.

However, Laughter was the first to speak—

"Your Majesty," he said with an elegance of manner that made Morality feel cloutish. "I've come to beg another chance for Theodore Vidal."

"He has outraged me," interrupted Morality in surly fashion. "Leave him to Gloom and Cowardice who have just taken hold of him; they'll soon bring him to the hell he deserves."

"What has he done?" asked Destiny.

"He has put a soul in peril," said Morality.

"But he sinned with a gay heart and without malice," pleaded Laughter.

"Nevertheless it is clear he has sinned," said Destiny a little sadly. "I will therefore sign the decree for his. . . ."

But just then the youngest of the gods came running up with his crown set jauntily over his ear and a knowing merry twinkle in his eyes.

"Before your Majesty signs," he pleaded, and he removed his crown with a flourish as of a *panache*.

Destiny, whose heart was really benevolent, looked down at the merry boy who had so much more influence with him than any of the elder gods.

"What is it, madcap Irony?" he asked. "What mischief are you up to now?"

"May it please your Majesty," said Irony. "If you will leave the matter to me for twenty-four hours, perhaps I could save the soul of Theodore Vidal for heaven. Your Majesty knows that since the Reformation no one comes here but sour-faced people. We badly need a few merry souls."

"It is a long time since I have laughed," said Destiny wearily. "Have your way—I'll delay signing this decree for twenty-four hours."

"I'll start for earth at once," said Irony.

Thereupon he took off his wings and tucked them under Destiny's throne and slid down to the earth on a sunbeam until he landed, a burst of light, on a gas-jet in a dingy back room in Bloomsbury where Theodore Vidal, dressed as for a party, was standing meditating suicide.

II

At Oxford they used to call Vidal "Marius," though of Marius's melancholy sentimentalism he had little. But he did share with Pater's hero the delicate hedonism which in his prototype had found its outward expression in a rose upon an embroidered toga.

All at once his eclectic career was ended at twenty-three—"Without money one cannot live beautifully," he said; and he told himself that he would have no pangs at leaving life. There

may have been some bravado in this, but souls like this, outwardly so incapable of facing a tragic issue, discover in themselves a strength of gaiety that makes them feel the ultimate surrender as little as did Socrates.

Vidal felt he had been present at a good comedy, the dénouement had been unfolded, and now it was merely the function of good art to see that the curtain fell as soon as possible.

Difficulties had come in the way of his dying as beautifully as he wished. His choice would have been to go to the East where life mingles with death as moonlight with waters. Next to that graciousness, he loved quietness and obscurity, and it was this that had driven him to the back room in Bloomsbury.

Three days ago he had sent all his things to a warehouse and written to the only people that mattered that he was starting for the East via Paris, never to return. They would not be surprised at the news—it was like him to go on sudden far journeys, and he had always spoken of his envy of Arthur Rimbaud who, after his meteoric literary career, had died peddling strange merchandise among the tribes of the Orient.

He had paid for his room in advance and brought into it only a suitcase which contained his evening clothes, an opera hat and three books—*Mademoiselle de Maupin, Salammbo,* and *Il Fuoco.*

His first idea had been to open a vein, and while life flowed out to read some languorous page on which passion flowered and faded. But he had given that up because the book might have been a clue to his identity, and the thought of blood repelled him as did the thought of any physical deformation. He wanted to look in death as he had looked in life, indifferent to all things and with a quiet gaiety on his lips.

This last evening on which he meant to live he had dressed carefully in his evening clothes—his tall, slim figure was always at its best in them—and gone to a pawnbroker's with his suit case and his lounge suit. He had only to give a false name and there would be no likelihood of tracing his identity from them.

Then he had walked straight back to his room and finished his preparations for death. He had still three chapters of *Il Fuoco* to read, then he would burn the book as he had burned the other two, turn the gas on slowly and take a strong sleeping powder.

As he was about to throw himself on the bed, the descending sun reached a point on the horizon level with his window, and a dazzling ray came through, making a path of light across the room's obscurity.

His eye followed it to where it danced on the wall around the gas-jet.

What a hideous-looking thing it was! What hideous paper there was on the wall behind it! What a hideous, sordid place to die! As if to encounter the full hideousness of it all at once he went over and turned on the gas and drank in the stench of it. Then he reached for his hat.

"I must fill the place with incense first."

He had to go some distance before he found the incense he wanted, and half an hour had elapsed before he got back to the lodginghouse. The sun had gone down and the landlady was lighting a lamp in the hall.

"The gas 'as been leakin' something awful, somewhere, sir," she said. "An' I've 'ad to 'ave it turned off at the main until the man comes tomorrow morning."

Vidal said nothing but took the candle she offered him and went upstairs. There was no trace of a smell of gas anywhere, and he was irritated by the new problem before him.

He did not know that directly he had gone out for the incense, the landlady who had been watching him carefully for two days, had entered and searched his room. She had seen that his suitcase and clothes were gone, that

his books were burned . . . it was enough.

Thus did Irony employ the first minutes of the respite he had obtained for Theodore Vidal.

III

It might be possible, Vidal thought, to take enough of the sleeping draught to ensure death, but he did not know and he dreaded the awakening. For a long time he sat on his bed thinking, and then the one possible solution became more and more evident.

He went to the window and looked out. The night was full of stars and he felt that the moon was already high in the eastern sky. There was a soft freshness in the air that made him mindful of Hellas and the death of Sappho. He would cleave through the soft air in an ecstasy of swiftness, and the historic waters that had known all the pageantry of medieval kings, would close over him.

When he reached the street he began to walk quickly, scarcely ever lifting his eyes, for he was passing through mean place. But at the Strand he stopped for a moment and looked up—the moon must be shining full on the river, he thought. A woman of the streets came near, muttered something and touched him with her parasol. He shivered and walked on.

Presently he had crossed the Embankment and was far out on the bridge from which he meant to hurl himself.

The moon was momentarily behind a cloud and he stopped to watch the reflections of the stars and the river lights in the waters below. A quaint conceit struck him; the lights seemed to come flickering up from the depths and beckon him as if they were the souls of those who had come here on a pilgrimage like unto his own. . . . A policeman approached him, saw that he was well-dressed and cool, and passed on.

To plunge then and end it all, but what of the sequel! He could not but see himself dragged to the shore sopping and bedraggled. He must strip to the skin—let them find him so. There would be elegance and dignity in his white, clean-limbed body; the moon would shine upon his chest and throat.

He looked this way and that across the bridge before undressing. A woman was approaching and he walked slowly towards her to allay suspicion, but he did not look at her; his eye ranged over the grey splendor that is London.

"You, Theodore!"

He came suddenly to a halt—the woman had stopped beside him. He noted her grace and the fastidious gown, but the shadow of a girder was on her face. . . .

Suddenly he swept his hat off with one hand and with the other took her proffered hand and kissed it.

"How strange, after all these years," he said.

"You have not changed."

"You have changed only to become more beautiful."

"As skilful as ever, but you flatter me because you cannot see my face."

"Wait a moment . . . there, I can see it now. It is framed in the moonlight as it used to be those nights. . . ."

"When you taught me your philosophy, Theodore. I was an apt pupil."

"You have not regretted it?"

"I hardly know."

"I have never regretted it."

"Then why are you here?"

"Why do you ask?"

They looked straight at one another, but it was she who had most self-control.

"Queer," she murmured, "if we should end our lives together as we began them."

"You disappeared—what happened?"

"I followed your gospel."

"You knew where to find me."

"What was the use? Your first passion was over, and so was mine."

"The disciple went beyond the master, I see. I regretted you."

"I regretted you, too. There has never been anyone quite the same."

"Have there been . . . others?"

She shook her head—

"I was careful. You used to say without money one could not live beautifully. I have saved a lot of money."

He remembered the woman of the streets who had touched him in the Strand and she could see him wince. She went on—

"I know what you think."

"But why are you here? Are you in trouble? Has he left you?"

"No, indeed, I have left him. I have all the money I need now. I wanted to go away and live beautifully, but tonight I found I couldn't go. I can never go. The lure of things, you know, things. . . ."

He nodded, but in such a way that for the first time she spoke sharply—

"No, you, don't know. . . . It isn't that and it isn't money. It is the power and admiration I can't leave . . . and yet, well I've sold a lot of beauty —I want to buy some now."

"Are you in love?"

"Perhaps . . . are you?"

"Perhaps . . . hopelessly?"

"I don't know. . . . Why have you come to this?"

"Because of my own philosophy, my dear Marjorie. I've lost all my money. I was awaiting to strip and throw myself from the bridge when I saw you coming along."

There was a pause while she traced patterns on the ground with her foot; then she looked up—

"Strange if we had met in the other world."

"There is none for me—Hades disappeared two thousand years ago."

"I believe there is . . . have you no money left at all?"

"Three and ninepence, the balance from what the pawnbroker gave me for my clothes."

"You wouldn't die if you had money?"

"Of course not. That's where you're foolish. Take the morning train for Paris and in a week you'll forget your unresponsive lover."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"Have you ever been in love?"

"Perhaps."

The policeman came by again and flashed his lantern into their faces, but, though he was puzzled by their tenseness, he said nothing. When he had gone by she turned to Vidal.

"There's no reason why you should die—you can have my money."

"Good Heavens, no."

"Why not? You are a pagan. I tell you that what I sold was beauty. Perhaps there wasn't much that was lovely in those men—there very often isn't, you know, where there's money—but I brought out whatever love of beauty they had."

"A man can't get away from his tradition easily. . . . But why do you offer to do this?"

"Because I've decided to die, for one thing; and because, well, it would be ridiculous to deny it, I love you."

Vidal did not answer at once. The murmur of life was in his ears, and a thousand pleasant memories crowded around him clamant of pleasurable days to come.

For a while she watched his imagination trace the record of them on his sensitive face; then she took his chin in her hand and turned his head around until the moonlight fell full upon them both and she could look straight into his eyes—

"You have come back," she said.

With a sudden gesture he folded her in his arms.

IV

Soon they were walking towards the Westminster shore; tomorrow they would be married and start for the East to be lost forever in its ageless anonymity.

As they walked through the gray streets, the twilight filled them with a quiet ecstasy, and when they came to her apartment they parted at the door. Twin, elemental souls they had discovered in self-denial the subtlest of all delicate emotions.

On the morrow they were married at a registrar's and then motored leisurely to Dover to take the night boat for Calais. They were not far out upon the water when the North Sea sent down a dense fog, and the shrieking of sirens filled the night with uncanny fears.

Suddenly there was a rushing of sailors to and fro and a moment after came a crash that shook the packet.

Vidal and Majorie rushed on deck. Their one chance was to jump clear of the sinking boat.

They jumped, but the suction of the boat drew them under. The twenty-four hours allowed by Destiny had elapsed and the clear, cold waters closed over their bodies while their souls went winging up through the empyrean, and Irony, at their heels, drew a curtain of stars behind them.

THE EVANGELICAL BURLESQUE SHOW

By Lars Rue

BURLESQUE shows are too uplifting.

When I behold one I am seized with an overwhelming desire to be decent, uprighteous, clean and manly—anything but wayward. Hideously shaped fat legs exhibited in loud-colored stockings and going through grotesque and ungraceful gyrations produce within me a strong craving for woolen hoopskirts. Carmen lips and penciled eyes make me long for the face of a child. Undraped bosoms make me a staunch advocate of high-neck dresses and a bitter opponent of the décolleté. The sight of time-worn dilapidated hussies, possessing the same claim to beauty as an insane gorilla, imbues me with a yearning for bachelor apartments. Jokes about onions and September Morn give me a strange bias for the Sixth Commandment. A harsh shrill voice mercilessly slaughtering the vestige of music that accidentally crept into the score fills me with a love for the songs of birds in Spring. An abomination labelled, "The Gotrox Summer Home," is a powerful argument for the scenery of a city park.

Burlesque shows are uplifting. They raise the dickens with the attempts of the Devil to make vice alluring. I'm against burlesque shows. They are altogether too uplifting!

THE only thing that interests a woman more than the blubbering of a young man in love is her own cooing to this same young man.

WHEN a woman is just, it is because she is going to get even with some male.

WHY MARIA POSTPONED HER SHOPPING

By James Nicholas Young

COUNTLESS millions of horrible eyes, emanating a sullen hatred, fixed me with their hideous glares. A blinding radiance from the seething cauldrons of the infernal regions played mercilessly upon me. A sinister silence, redolent of all the sins and wickedness of every age, enveloped me. Quaking in abject terror, sweating at every pore, and barely conscious, I awaited my sentence from Beelzebub.

"Stretch forth thy hand!"

The words came forth like the bellowing of a thousand wounded hippopotami. It was indeed, as I had feared, the ruler of Hell who spoke.

"Eat that which I have given thee," boomed out the Devil, "and may thy measly soul find everlasting torment!"

Seizing the hellish poison I bolted it.

Then I awoke.

I had swallowed my wife Maria's glass eye.

CHANSON NAÏVE

By John McClure

I SHALL steal upon her
Where she sits so white,
Creep-mouse, creep-mouse,
In the twilight.

She sits in the shadows
Dreamy, dreamy—
I shall go stealthily
So she cannot see me.

I shall steal behind her
And kiss her on the cheek
And cover up her wee mouth
So she cannot speak.

I would fain surprise her
If so be I might,
Creep-mouse, creep-mouse,
In the twilight.

THE WINDOW OF HORRORS

By William Drayham

THE little shops nestle elegantly along the bright avenue. The tall buildings preen themselves in the sunlight. Their windows glisten and are like ranks upon ranks of little golden and silver butterflies. The people who stroll in the avenue are also quite elegant. They look idly at the luxurious automobiles which glide back and forth down the street. They seem very happy, as if nothing were wrong with the world, as if a carefully manicured and pomaded God were in his boudoir heaven.

They look at the little shop windows, these strollers; at the windows in which such pretty pictures are for sale, in which bizarre knick-knacks lure the eye.

Sometimes they pause in little polite clusters to gaze upon jewels which lie on black velveted surfaces or to admire the Japanese oddities—those fantastically colored and shaped bird cages and Mandarin gowns, potteries and silks—which make you dream for the moment. But always before the window of the *Maison des Robes* they gather most thickly, they pause most delightedly.

For the window of the *Maison des Robes* is entirely the despair of all the other shop keepers in the avenue. It is a Paradise of windows. It is a window of enchantments. It is a fairyland of chiffons and satins, tulles and cloths which I cannot name. The women who stroll in the Avenue sigh when they pause before it. Here are other windows which exhibit clothes. But they are not like the window of the *Maison des Robes.*

Here there is something strange, something which fascinates. It has an air, just as a Princess has an air. Even men stop to look into it. They behold Romance and Mystery and a loveliness which pales the effulgence of the sun.

Women behold their dreams herein. Before them float gowns which are to their souls as beautiful thoughts are to the souls of the poets. These gowns are worn by strange inanimate figures which stand remarkably silent, in attitudes so startling, so perfect that men often feel their hearts beat faster when they look at them and women always smile with envy.

It is not as if these things were real within the window of the *Maison des Robes.* They are beyond reality. They belong in the region of masterpieces, of things which surpass nature and gladden the eyes of the world with visions of the ideal.

The shopkeepers often come to look upon this window and to study it. They search the world for and sometimes find such gowns as Mr. Hugo Blute manages to discover and place in his window. They buy of the best figures and employ the most artistic drapers and window trimmers. But even as Reynolds sought to learn the secrets of Titian by scraping the colors from the Venetian's canvas, even as Wilde sought to untangle the tints of Huysmann, they fail.

You see in their windows only clothes, merely a conventional beauty which makes you think of money and of corsets. But in the window of the *Maison des Robes* there are things you

do not see and you search in your mind for fantasies, you dream of ball rooms and grottos, and the boulevard seems to you for the moment like some elegant and exquisite street in an Arabian Night.

II

On the morning of a certain day early in June the *Maison des Robes* was unusually crowded. Usually but a woman or two was to be seen therein beside the very polite and pretty clerks. But this day witnessed twenty-seven women, all of them young, all of them possessed of various beauty. They entered one at a time, surveyed for a moment the grey walls, the costly modulated furnishings, and were approached by a matron with white hair and a regal step.

Thus one by one they were ushered through the sumptuous salesroom past the two great black framed mirrors and into an office which was at the rear. The pretty clerks seemed undisturbed by their advent. They stood in their places like figures in a stage set for Maeterlinck. At one side a willowy black-haired young woman walked slowly back and forth before the gaze of two customers who had alighted from an electric. The elder customer surveyed the willowy one through a lorgnette. A girl with her watched with intent interest the influx of the twenty-seven.

In the office the twenty-seven found chairs to sit upon and two long benches. Only a few were obliged to remain standing.

They had come in answer to a tiny advertisement which had appeared in the columns of the morning newspapers.

The advertisement read:

Wanted—Six of the most beautiful young women in Chicago to work as manikins. No references required. Foreign girls preferred. Apply in person to Mr. Hugo Blute, — East Michigan avenue, at 5 p.m., sharp.

The young women who now waited for Mr. Blute to arrive preserved a dignified silence and gazed at each other speculatively. Some were obviously of the *demi monde*—bold and artificial Venuses. Some were less elaborately dressed, but fresher looking and possessed of a reposeful prettiness. A few were remarkable-looking, remarkably featured, with eyes which glowed with violet fires.

They had been waiting less than ten minutes when Mr. Blute entered. There was a hurried shuffling of feet and a stir of great portent.

Mr. Blute was a Paganini of shopkeepers—a dwarf-like Paganini. He was a short man with a large head on which lay a mop of black hair, that gave him an appearance of incongruous ferocity. For otherwise he was an elegantly dressed little man, in an afternoon coat, carefully tapering and pressed trousers, pointed black patent leather shoes and linen quite resplendent.

Yet above this almost doll-like costume arose Mr. Blute's massive head and hair. It was apparent that Mr. Blute gave this part of his person a great deal of attention. His face was carefully massaged, his hair was violently combed. His eyebrows, alas, were slightly stenciled and the swarthiness of his skin was relieved by a faint pink flush of some careful cosmetic.

But despite these things Mr. Blute's nose remained obtrusively large, his lips obtrusively heavy, his eyes glistening and in an inexplicable manner, malignant. His hair remained likewise moplike. There was something pathetic, in fact, about Mr. Blute when he powdered his nose as he did at frequent intervals, to remove the oily glisten which lay upon his skin.

He entered his office with the dapper step of a man who has small feet. He held a silk hat in his hand and a pair of yellow gloves in the other, together with a black lacquer cane.

The twenty-seven who awaited him eyed him with a kindred emotion. They were somewhat startled. It was always this way with people who gazed upon Mr. Blute for the first time. There was always something vaguely

startling and dwarfish about the man until one became inured to him. People who encountered him suddenly would often feel an impulse to gasp.

"Good evening, ladies," said Mr. Blute, in a thin, sweet voice, and depositing his hat, gloves and cane on top of a large mahogany desk he sat down in the swivel chair and surveyed the twenty-seven beauties his advertisement had brought together.

After his polite salutation he seemed to become all business at once.

He eyed his visitors with a general keenness, as one eyes an ensemble.

He announced:

"You will first fill out these blanks which I give you and then return them to me. Come forward one at a time, please."

With an exaggerated restraint the twenty-seven obeyed. As they approached to receive their blanks a queer light kindled in Mr. Blute's little black eyes.

The printed matter on the blanks requested each to state her age, her name, her address, her birthplace, and to give what relatives she had in the city, if any. There was a great scribbling among the twenty-seven, who had removed their gloves and revealed an assortment of beautiful and jeweled hands.

Mr. Blute appeared to wax mysteriously excited. He so far forgot himself as to open a drawer of his desk, extract a small powder puff and powder his heavy nose. He also rubbed his palms together and clucked genially with his tongue. One by one the twenty-seven returned the blanks amid a silence. In this silence Mr. Blute then studied the blanks for fully twenty minutes with an expression of intense absorption on his face. Each one he read carefully and placed in one of three divisions.

Finally he called the names of eight of the young women in the office and added:

"Those whose names I have called may go home."

The eight beautiful women whose names had been pronounced arose frowning and walked with great dignity out of the office.

When they had left Mr. Blute clucked his tongue again and said:

"We can now proceed with more despatch. Will Miss Margaret Swinburne step forward, please?"

A tall blonde detached herself and approached.

Mr. Blute eyed her closely.

"You have no father or mother," he said, waving one of the blanks before him. "You are an orphan, yes?"

Miss Swinburne said, "Yes."

"Good," Mr. Blute chuckled.

He looked at her and bade her turn around.

He studied her features intently and after the pause announced, somewhat inanely, as may be seen:

"Excellent. I am devoted to orphans. I favor them in my shop. I employ them. I will employ you. Your duties, you know, will be only to wear beautiful clothes. Silks and laces. You understand what a manikin is?"

Miss Swinburne nodded graciously.

"To show my fashionable customers how beautiful are my clothes," said Mr. Blute, as if Miss Swinburne hadn't understood.

An excitement again appeared to possess him and as if to contain himself he added abruptly:

"You are accepted, Miss Swinburne. Will you sit over there?"

In this same peculiar and abrupt manner Mr. Blute selected the five others from the group. There were several whom Mr. Blute dismissed reluctantly, gazing with glowing eyes upon their lovely faces and turning them around and around before him.

"Ah—ah—" he murmured each time. "You are what I want—what I desire—but—unsuited. Too bad."

He shook his massive head sorrowfully, clucked dismally with his tongue and waved his hand toward the door. But on the whole the six whom he had chosen were among the most remarkable of the beautiful young women.

When the others had departed Mr.

Blute sprang from his chair and announced sweetly.

"So. It is settled. You shall all wear beautiful clothes and receive twenty-five dollars each a week. Hugo Blute is not cheap. No. He is—ha!"

He indulged in a vague trilling little laugh and, paused thus in his praise, he assumed a droll position, his short arms folded across his bulky chest, his large head thrown back.

"But there must be a contract, ladies," he went on. "You must agree to place yourselves in my hands for two days. I will take you to the St. John Hotel and send you my most beautiful dresses to become acquainted with. I wish you to try them on and become used to their lines and able to wear them—magnificently."

Here Mr. Blute indulged in his little trilling laugh again and the six beautiful young women regarded his mysterious amusement with six beautiful smiles.

"You will wear them a long time," he said. "I employ orphans and am kind to them. I employ them as long as they remain beautiful. Your only duties while I employ you will be to show off my exquisite dresses to the fashionable ladies. Do I speak plainly? Am I understood?"

A chorus of "Yesses" answered him.

Mr. Blute became suddenly animate. His short legs seemed to prance. He passed among the six manikins to be and shook hands with each of them, patting them tenderly on their arms and clucking up at them.

"Follow me, young ladies," he added. "My automobile will take you to the hotel. Is there anyone of you will have to notify someone of her absence?"

There was a pause. During this pause Mr. Blute became dark and his face glistened.

He eyed each of the six beautiful young women with an ominous, somewhat aggrieved frown, and waited.

After a brief silence a pretty black-haired girl raised her voice.

"I must tell my uncle," she said.

"What's your name?" Mr. Blute asked curtly.

"Miss Marlow."

"Miss Marlow," said Mr. Blute, you may go home to your uncle. Now, is there anyone else?"

The dismissed one hesitated. Mr. Blute ignored her. The remaining five then watched Miss Marlow leave the office and appeared slightly puzzled. But when she had gone, Mr. Blute diverted their attention with a violent laugh.

"Very well," he cried. "Follow me."

He led his smiling and elated troupe through the luxurious salesroom to a large green limousine which waited at the curb.

It had grown dark. The avenue glowed in the dusk. Vivid patches of light gleamed over the pavements. Clusters of lamps shone gayly down the line of the curbing. People were still strolling leisurely, elegantly by. But now over the avenue was an air of quest, a spirit of masquerade. The hurrying cabs and motors perforated the gloom with their long shafts of light.

"Step in," said Mr. Blute to his troupe. "The chauffeur will be here directly. All arrangements have been made."

One by one the five disappeared into the tonneau. He waited and closed the door upon them. He exuded a joyous politeness, laughing aimlessly, bowing elaborately to the laden tonneau, returning briskly to his establishment. Inside Mr. Blute spoke briefly to two of his pretty clerks who were covering the stock and fixtures preparatory to leaving.

"Run along," he ordered, "and play. Run along, children. Don't waste time. Time is valuable, very valuable to the young. Ah, make the most of life."

He patted the two clerks upon the arm in a happy, paternal fashion and approached the white-haired and regal stepping matron—his bookkeeper.

"Run along, run along, Miss Jones," he said to her.

He waited until his staff had clothed itself and bidden him good evening.

and, as the last one passed through the door, he hurried into his office.

Five minutes later a man in a great black coat wearing goggles and a pointed cap mounted the driver's seat of Mr. Blute's machine. This person clucked with his tongue in a way highly reminiscent of his employer, Mr. Blute, and in fact seemed possessed of another of his habits. For, as he adjusted himself in the seat, he extracted a little powder puff from one of his large pockets and dabbed whimsically at his nose. This tell-tale ritual accomplished, the mysterious chauffeur swung his car into the mass of traffic and spun away in the direction of the St. John Hotel.

III

MR. BLUTE, looking tired and slightly disheveled, entered the *Maison des Robes* the following morning. He glanced keenly at his pretty clerks who were standing in a solemn little group near the center of the room and bending over an opened newspaper. Mr. Blute paused, he came near them.

"Too bad, ladies," he said. "It is a terrible thing."

"Oh, we are so sorry," one of them answered, and Mr. Blute, shaking his head, sadly passed on into his office.

He closed the door and drew from his pocket a newspaper and sitting down at his desk read the account of the tragedy which had overtaken five young women and an intoxicated chauffeur.

The newspaper stated the young women had been selected by Mr. Blute as the most beautiful in Chicago and were being escorted to the St. John Hotel in the automobile belonging to the proprietor of the *Maison des Robes*. The chauffeur as he guided the machine had appeared to be intoxicated to at least several crossing policemen who remembered his passing. He had, this diabolical chauffeur, finally ended by crashing through the slight guard at the river's edge and into the river, at Adams street. The bridge at this point had been open at the time. Repairs which were being made on the structure had necessitated the closing of the street and thus it was that the accident had been witnessed by no one. An officer named Maloney was the first to arrive on the scene. He peered into the black water and saw great ripples dancing under the red lights of the bridge. It was eight o'clock, according to Policeman Maloney.

Mr. Blute studied the story closely as he read, rereading several paragraphs.

Pressing a button, he summoned one of his pretty clerks and ordered her to secure him copies of the afternoon papers as soon as they appeared.

As he waited their arrival, two policeman desecrated the interior of the establishment with their heavy feet and loud voices, and ended by being ushered into the proprietor's presence. They informed him that his limousine had been fished out of the river, little the worse for wear, but that the police had been unable to recover the bodies of the five young women.

Mr. Blute listened gravely. He answered their questions freely, telling them of the chauffeur whom he had only hired two days before and whose first name was Harold.

"It is awful," said Mr. Blute, covering his face with his hands. "I had prepared rooms at the St. John Hotel and given the man instructions to go there at once. The tragedy has unnerved me, gentlemen."

"We are draggin' fer the ladies and the chauffeur," said one of the policemen, "and will let you know, Mr. Blute, as soon as we find anything."

To the newspaper reporters who arrived at the *Maison des Robes* as the police were leaving, Mr. Blute announced that he would bestow a sum of $100 upon each of the families of the deceased five young women. He revealed their names, as he had done to the police, described their beauties, dwelt bitterly upon the drunkenness of the miserable chauffeur, wrung his hands and clucked solemnly with his tongue.

For eight days the police continued to drag the river for the bodies of the six victims. During this time, apparently overcome by the disaster, Mr. Blute relapsed into a morose condition. His pretty clerks saw him but little. He called upon the police captain in charge of the search for the bodies daily.

At the end of the eighth day the body of a young woman was found near the mouth of the river. The body was taken to the morgue and there identified by a young man as the remains of Mary Collins, his sister. Miss Collins, it developed at once, was one of the five beautiful women who had been chosen by the discriminating Mr. Blute.

The brother identified the body by means of the clothes the young woman wore and a signet ring which she had borrowed from him only a week before. The features were discolored beyond recognition by the water, seeming also to have sustained certain bruises.

In quick succession during that night four other bodies were recovered from the mouth of the river. Like the first, their faces were disfigured by discolorations and bruises. The coroner and police explained this fact by the theory that the bruises had been sustained in the accident itself, the plunge into the river, and the discolorations had been brought on by the abrasions.

Three of the bodies were identified by landladies. One was a Miss Helen Lowrey. The second, Miss Dorothy Janes. The third, Miss Anna Hyde. The landladies wept and declared the victims had roomed with them when alive. The identifications were made by means of the clothing, of rings, ornaments, shoes and hosiery. Mr. Blute himself established the identify of the fourth, remembering in particular the black and white checked suit in which the body was attired—and the long grey gloves.

An inquest was held and the bodies buried. The search for the drunken chauffeur was discontinued. Mr. Blute reimbursed the brother of one of the victims with his check for $100, and thus two weeks after the evening of the tragedy the matter was forgotten, and business at the *Maison des Robes* was resumed.

Even Mr. Blute appeared to have recovered some of his joyous and paternal air which the incident had for the time taken from him. The elegant people who walked in the avenue passed the window of the famous establishment and soon forgot, as they gazed at the exquisite interior, the story of the five beautiful women, the drunken chauffeur and the open bridge.

The night after the inquest, Mr. Blute walked briskly towards his home. His automobile was still suffering repair. He had ridden to a point within four blocks of where he lived in the street car. It was warm and the promise of a storm was in the sultry air.

Mr. Blute's home was a large red brick house located in a peculiarly dismal part of the city which had once been the center of wealth and society. The mansions which had once lent an air of solid and tasteful affluence to the street now stood with their windows broken, their porches sunken, their stairs overgrown. Large "For Sale" signs painted white, shone out of the darkness. Here and there were some still inhabited.

A stagnation had apparently overtaken the district. To the south furious building activities had converted the almost prairies of twenty years ago into populous resident sections. To the north the avenue had changed the scene into one of glitter and prosperity.

But in this space, where stood the home of Mr. Blute a decay had fallen. The night lay somberly upon it, the sagging outlines of the tumble-down mansions appeared faintly out of the unrelieved gloom.

Before one of the more preserved of these mansions Mr. Blute stopped. A single light burned in an upper window.

Mr. Blute, peering into the darkness about him, suddenly mounted the steps and let himself into the house with a key.

He locked the door carefully behind him.

For a moment he stood still and listened and then he walked to a front window in the large barren room to the right of the hall and dropped to his knees in front of a cracked pane.

He remained thus on his knees for ten minutes, peering cautiously into the street, only his mop of hair and gleaming eyes visible above the ledge.

After gazing into the vacant street in this odd manner, Mr. Blute arose, rubbed his palms together and, smiling, tiptoed gently up the stairs.

The old mansion became full of creakings and groanings as Mr. Blute progressed. But at the top of the flight he paused and the noises ceased.

He paused and peered intently at a door behind which a light burned. Into his eyes came, it seemed, an answering light, a faintly ecstatic gleam.

Mr. Blute inserted a key in the door lock and turned it. The door opened slowly.

The room in front of Mr. Blute was illuminated by a lighted gas jet. Across the walls fell long trembling shadows. He walked directly to the jet and turned on the light fuller. Two cabinets, in which a variety of odd surgical instruments and bottles of colored liquids reposed, came into view. Also ranged across one end of the room there appeared to be five long tables on which lay the bodies of the five young women, who had entered Mr. Blute's automobile one evening two weeks ago.

IV

MR. BLUTE, as if remembering something, dashed back to the door and locked it with the key. He then returned to the other end of the room and surveyed the contents of the five tables. Each of them was partially covered with a black cloth.

"Ah, my beauties," said Mr. Blute softly. "Everything is settled. You have been decently buried. And one of you has cost me an extra $100."

He frowned at the middle figure and wagged a reproving forefinger at it.

"Why didn't you mention that brother of yours, eh? Pah! Women are never to be trusted," he growled.

But recovering his good spirits Mr. Blute clucked genially with his tongue, walked to one of the cabinets and proceeded to remove an array of apparatus, instruments and bottles.

As he made these preparations his eyes strayed continually to the bodies on the tables. He kept numbling to himself:

"Orphans, excellent. Ah, beauties. I have made no mistakes . . . no mistakes."

The proprietor of the *Maison des Robes* then spread out his strange paraphernalia on a sixth and smaller table. His mop of hair became awry, his eyes gleamed and an unlovely oil gradually overspread his face.

But his hands were busy, dexterously busy. They mixed the liquids of the bottles, they lighted little gas burners and cooked little pots. There was an elaborate methodicality about Mr. Blute during these operations. He counted things, he insisted upon laying everything straight and keeping everything clean.

Towards the end of his labors he grew excited, gazing into the bubbling pots, clucking with his tongue and finally prancing up and down and rubbing his palms vigorously together.

It was obvious that Mr. Blute was preparing a solution, a delicate, difficult solution from the intensity of his maneuverings. Having prepared this in at least five different ways—there were five little pots, Mr. Blute filled a long hollow needle-like instrument with the bubbling liquid from one of the pots.

"It is perfect," he mumbled, "perfect. The perfect fluid. Ah, what would the Ptolomies have given for it?

He then folded his short arms across his bosom and surveyed with dignity the five bodies which lay stiff and beautiful upon the five tables.

"One more injection," he mumbled, "and it is complete. But first another bath—one more bath."

Opening a drawer beneath one of the cabinets, Mr. Blute extracted a large bottle containing a violet liquid.

With this in his hand he approached first the body of Margaret Swinburne, looking as she had looked when he had asked her her name in his office two weeks ago. With the violet liquid he proceeded to bathe her face.

An odd spicy smell crept into the room.

The inanimate face underwent simultaneously a remarkable change.

The skin appeared to revive, the flesh seemed to bloom, a glowing tint of life suffused the throat.

"Four baths," mumbled Mr. Blute, "I must remember. Only four. And I must not forget the hair."

Darting to the cabinet he returned with a bottle of dark liquid and this he applied expertly to the head. The blonde hair, which he loosened, shimmered under the application. Slowly its color changed, Mr. Blute drenching it delicately with the contents of the bottle. It become a smouldering auburn. This accomplished, Mr. Blute returned to his long needle instrument.

"Now," he addressed the figure upon which he had been working: "We shall see. This way."

With quick little movements he inserted the point of the needle into the tips of the slender fingers, each time loosing some of the liquid by means of the silver plunger which formed the upper part of the instrument. The eleventh injection Mr. Blute made into the heart.

As soon as they were finished he seized the body in a frenzy and staggering under its weight carried it to a bench which stood near the cabinets.

"Now," he cried, "the pose, the pose. This way. No. Turn the head. The foot out. You will sit. A morning costume. So. The right foot in. The arm out. The fingers. My God, are you stupid! The fingers, so; open one. Close the other. The knee less bent. Ah! Excellent. Leaning forward a bit. Ah, what grace. As if you listened. So. As if you had something to say, ha, ha."

As he spoke or rather ejaculated, Mr. Blute's hands manipulated the body before him. It resembled, the operation did, some weird sculpturing. But the pose he finally achieved seemed to delight him. He hovered around it. Now and then he added a finishing touch, a final angle. But soon the limbs ceased to obey his sensitive movements. He strained the wrist in an effort to undo a curve. He might as well have sought to undo the curve of some marble wrist. A gleam of triumph came into his eyes.

"You harden quickly," he gasped. "Quicker than ever. An hour quicker! I have barely time to adjust! Eh! And this time you will last longer; yes. Two years, my beauty. And then perhaps—who knows—the fluid which is forever. I think now, that you will do."

The remainder of the night Mr. Blute spent in similar ministrations upon the other four bodies. Each be bathed in the peculiarly smelling liquid. Each revived under his touch, losing its still ghastly stiffness, growing mysteriously alive, acquiring a delicate blooming transparency of skin as of death made beautiful. The hair of each Mr. Blute dyed a different color!

At dawn Mr. Blute had finished. The five were posed. They lay now upon the tables in impossible posturings, ludicrously sinister, lovely and vicious, like a family of houris caught by some sudden enchantment which had perpetuated them in their casual graces. Each had suffered the careful and elaborate adjusting of Mr. Blute.

Tired and disheveled, he stood in the center of the room and panted. The air was full of an almost suffocating odor. But a prodigious strength seemed to be his.

With a great sigh he lifted the body of Miss Swinburne upon his shoulder and carried her into an adjacent room.

On the floor of this room were laid six oblong boxes. Their lids had been

opened and each of the boxes contained a naked wax model to which was affixed a wire standard.

It was Mr. Blute's purpose to sever the wire standards from the wax models and attach them to the bodies of his five young women. This he did carefully, placing each of the bodies, when he had finished, into each box occupied by the wax dummies.

V

An hour later Mr. Blute sat and waited for the arrival of the wagon from the *Maison des Robes*. He had washed his face and hands, changed his clothes, powdered his nose and violently brushed his hair.

The wagon came and Mr. Blute supervised the loading of the oblong boxes, which had been recrated and carefully relabeled by their owner. Seated then on one of them, the erratic Mr. Blute was driven into the avenue and around to a point in the rear of the *Maison des Robes*.

He emerged into his establishment and ordered his clerks to bring out the five costumes which had been selected. Then standing with the fluffy silken mass in his arms, he announced: "I do not wish to be disturbed until I ring," and retired into his office where the five oblong boxes had been taken.

He uncrated them one at a time, attiring them in lingerie petticoats, shoes and the costumes.

To the first he pinned a bit of paper on the hem of the petticoat. On the paper were the initials M. C. which, in Mr. Blute's mind, were obviously the initials of Mary Collins.

He placed the carefully dressed body in a corner and proceeded with the second. His actions were tender, wistful and expert.

It was well along in the afternoon when Mr. Blute issued from his office and summoned his pretty clerks.

"We will not place the figures in the window. We will take the figures which are in there out and put them in the boxes. Handle everything carefully, ladies."

The clerks stepped at the door of Mr. Blute's private office and gasped.

Confronting them were five beautiful young women attired in the height of exquisite fashion. One of them was standing smiling with a simple and yet startling grace to her outlines. A second was seated and gazing nochalantly at her dainty boot. She seemed to be meditating upon the filmiest of secrets. A third was standing with her head turned and her mouth slightly opened in a look of pleasant surprise. A fourth was seated, leaning forward as if in conversation. Words trembled on her lips and there was about her the air of a woman who is struggling to reveal something of piquant importance. The fifth stood straight and tall, her eyes lowered, her arms listless, as if she were dreaming for the instant of some memories far distant. They were all radiant and appeared to the astounded clerks to be alive.

"Beauties, eh?" clucked Mr. Blute, rubbing his palms together.

The clerks admired his handiwork without a word.

Then amid the delighted exclamations of his employes and three fashionable customers, the five models were carried one by one into the spacious and wonderfully draped window of the *Maison des Robes*.

From the sidewalk Mr. Blute surveyed the effect and pranced excitedly up and down. His face moved with queer grimaces and he appeared obsessed by a deep and silent joy. He raised his eyes to the sky and blinked in a solemn sort of thanksgiving or prayer.

Within the shop his clerks talked among themselves.

"Those are certainly the most beautiful figures Blute has had yet," said the first one. "They are remarkable. I never saw anything like them."

The second one came out of the window shaking her head solemnly.

"Yes," she agreed. "They are far superior to the last three figures we

had, although I can't see why Mr. Blute is throwing those last three out. They were better than anything on the avenue and hadn't begun to melt. *These* must have cost a fortune."

Miss Jones, the white-haired and regal-stepping one interrupted in a superior manner.

"A man like Mr. Blute," she said, "does not balk at expense in pursuing his art. I have been here for eight years and during that time he has had four shipments from France, each one better than the other. This is the fifth."

The conversation ceased as Mr. Blute re-entered his establishment. After gracefully receiving the congratulations of the occupants he retired to his office.

He closed the door behind him.

Then after a pause he opened the steel door of a wall safe and extracted from its interior a large ledger. This he carried to his desk.

Opening it to a blank page he wrote in it as follows:

Fifth Importation

For bodies from the Merville, Holmes, Wilmot and City Hospitals.
$10 each..... $50
For poison gun and limousine attachment 25
For embalming, mummifying chemicals 200
For rash statement to the press 100
For expressage of hospital bodies to mouth of the river..... 30
For wax models from France, destroyed 400

"I guess that's all," murmured Mr. Blute, and with a sigh he totalled the column.

A light of mystic satisfaction shone from him. He powdered his nose with the puff and rubbing his hands together added to himself:

"Eight hundred and five dollars! Twice as much as last time, ha! Hobbies cost money. Ah, well, art for art's sake."

Mr. Bluth then returned the ledger in the wall safe, locked the steel door and with a light brisk step re-entered his display room.

On the sidewalk a crowd of men and women had gathered. The men stared intensely into the window, their eyes smiling, their hearts beating fast. The women gazed enviously fascinated as always by this Paradise of windows, this fairyland of silks and laces and tulles, and graces. Exclamations of delight and wonder came from all sides, exclamations of astonishment and joy.

Mr. Blute stood in the plate glass door of his establishment, his large head thrown back, his hands clasped behind him and regarded the admiring throng with an expansive, though modest, smile.

A LADY is a lady even after she has consumed ten cocktails. A gentleman ceases to be a gentleman after the sixth.

THE modern husband is afraid to be polite to his wife in public. People will always think that he owes her money.

SENTIMENTALIST: one who believes that because a woman's teeth are white they aren't sharp.

YEARNINGS

By Michael Monahan

YOUR letter gave me a deep thrill of interest and emotion. I am old enough to offer you this as a genuine compliment. But you are wise and you know that age does not count with persons of the idealistic temperament in matters of the heart.

Yet I am not happy in replying to you. I dread new friendships, especially with women, which make disturbing claims upon a writer and interfere with his work For no matter how much a woman may protest her interest in your artistic effort, she is always more concerned to gain your admiration for herself. Fatally, inevitably she is a rival to your work, stealing the thought from under your pen, intruding her brow, her eyes, her lips between you and the face of your Dream.

Therefore, I pause ere I seal this letter, seized by I know not what presentiment of evil and misfortune from an act so simple. But our expectation of blessings from the unknown is so strong, in spite of dolorous and repeated disillusions, that I end by taking the hazard—as always!—and committing to the post the letter which is now before you. And the written word being gone beyond recall, I have an access of doubt and regret which causes me the most poignant misery.

Faint heart, you think, or perhaps more likely, the cold prudence of age?

I hasten to reassure you—though not what men call young, I am still far enough, thank God, from what women call old. Indeed, Madame, I have to strive constantly against this incorrigible youth of the heart—at once the blessing and the curse of the artistic nature—lest it lead me into folly unbecoming my years.

But do not mistake me. I am stronger than I long was, for I have learned that Love is a terrible wastrel. And—pardon me!—I have other honey to give ere my course be run. After all, you see, the sun is not so high as it was, and I cannot echo my youthful boast that a woman is the only thing for me between the heavens and the earth. Ah, Madame, I have been thoroughly tried in those sweet flames, and like holy Lawrence, I was anxious that the fire should reach every part. But one must pass on, after all—and especially, one must do one's stint of work. . . .

Then your letter came, as many a letter has come, and an old unrest of the heart was awakened. Why did I feel on touching your unopened letter, that it held some portentous word of fate which not to hear or know were better for my peace? Whence these intuitions, sudden lights flashed on the soul, which seem intended to warn and save us?

I looked long at the picture of the beautiful woman which came with your letter, and all my old cowardice and much of my old desire awoke. Those eyes, that mouth, that splendid hair, the whole conquering charm and beauty of you might well have overthrown a stronger will than mine.

Why did you send that picture if you were content merely to be, as you said, a friend standing in the shadow, with no claim upon my life? Do you not see that by this act of yours you have given the lie to your gracious promises?

I might have feared you less had I not thus early learned how much there is to fear!

For, in truth, I do fear this mimic semblance of you, as if it were the living woman whom I have never seen. The eyes seem to burn into mine—the lips seem to plead for a kiss—the entire sovereign seduction of you transpires from the pictured card. Yes, Madame, rejoice in your conquest! I do fear you; and I put away the picture where its insistent gaze may not affect my nerves, in order to frame a reply to your letter. . . .

Let me begin by granting that a great passion is the highest gift that can fall to man of the artistic temperament. I mean, of course, a passion which, soothing and satisfying, yet never cloying the physical man, shall spur the artist to the fullest exercise of his talent. I will even grant that the artist lacking this ideal companion and, in a sense, collaborator, must fail of complete expression. Such a passion means to him, in a word, perfect health and efficiency. That genius gives the best account of itself which has its most fruitful dreams upon the bosom of love.

Balzac, much as he feared woman as the most fatal source of distraction to the artist, yet knew, as he knew everything, how greatly art is indebted to her. And despite the famous chapter on celibacy in "Cousine Bette," we know that he allowed himself compensations far exceeding his written precept. Nor did he ever let go the fair hand of woman while building the immense edifice of the "Human Comedy," as if dreading to lose the one vital source of inspiration. During nearly twenty years—practically the entire span of his creative life—he wrote almost daily letters to Madame Hanska, making her, as it were, the patron saint of his achievement. This was, in truth, the greatest of his romances.

Byron defending his connection with the Guiccioli—the most fortunate of his friendships with women—declares in a letter to Moore that a passion is absolutely necessary to the mental life of a poet. Further he avers that but for his adventures and *affaires de coeur*, he would have vegetated in obscurity, voiceless and unknown, like many an English squire.

But, alas, Madame, how rare is such a passion among those clever but unfortunate people who make history, or biography, or scandal! It would seem that ideal matings are reserved to the common and undistinguished ones of the earth, or even the industrial classes. Who has not witnessed the exquisite idyls of affection among the poor and lowly? Plumbers hit off the grand passion more luckily than poets. Haberdashers are more happily married than great novelists and dramatists. Even the despised race of vagrant tinkers can point to examples of conjugal love and fidelity which put to shame the chronicles of genius. A wit of our time has aptly expressed the truth in this paraphrase of Gray's famous line:

"The short and simple *scandals* of the poor."

I suspect the poets have bargained ill with life, for what poem ever written can be compared to the perfect love of a woman's heart? . . .

You remember how Daudet explored this painful yet intensely human subject in his "Artists' Wives," certainly the most acute and searching, yet withal delicate analysis of the whole matter that has been made. What a charmingly gentle chirurgeon he appears in probing and revealing these lesions of the heart! What bitter truths he tells without bitterness! How pathetic these tragedies seem, which, upon reflection, we are astonished to find present only the common stuff of experience; it is the writer's art that has wrought the illusion. In Daudet's book you will find every type of incompatible, from the fool who hates her husband's talent and does him to death with her ignorant spleen, to the sly woman of the world who furthers her good man's interests at a certain expense to him unknown, in the peculiar French fashion.

In the prologue to this charming book (which only a Frenchman could have

written) Daudet seems to hold the thesis that men of the artistic vocation should not marry, the risks to their work being so great in an ill-assorted union. By way of clinching the point, he does not report a single strictly fortunate instance among his collection of artists' wives. Daudet was himself most felicitously married, as all authorities agree, and his book seems to me the more remarkable on this account.

That wonderful short-sighted observation of his, long applied to the world of Paris where such examples abound, reports only tragedies or failures.

Is it not cruel, Madame? But perhaps you ask, why is the artist so tragically liable to the misfortune of marriage? Let me answer in the words of Daudet. The first and greatest danger of marriage, he says, is the loss or degradation of one's talent. The ordinary run of men are, of course, exempted from this observation. "But for all of us, poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, who live outside of life, wholly occupied in studying it, in reproducing it, holding ourselves always a little remote from it, as one steps back from a picture the better to see it, I say that marriage can only be the exception. To that nervous, exacting, impressionable being, that child-man that we call the artist, a special type of woman almost impossible to find is needful; and the safest thing to do is *not to look for her!*"

But is the artist more fortunate, Madame, in seeking outside of marriage, in relations condemned by religion and the social law, that peace and joy which only union with a beloved woman can give? I will not deny that such connections occasionally seem to favor the painting of pictures and the writing of poetry or music—the paucity of the known instances and the celebrity of the persons lending to these a significance which they may not properly claim. Such friendships, of the left hand, are scarcely to be spoken of in this country, though our reticence on the point is no proof that they do not exist—I believe indeed that relations of this kind, more shrewdly concealed than in Europe, are far less uncommon than our conventional hypocrisy would allow.

Granting so much, what pledge of happiness do they offer the artist?—what hope of continuance, of fidelity and security? I believe in nothing so much as in miracles, Madame, yet there is but one answer to these questions. . . .

Alas, there is danger wherever we turn. The platonic friendship has long since been laughed out of court—it is possible only to the old or infirm. In the case of two normal persons, it is bound to end in possession, or—what is not so well known—in hatred on one side or the other. The man hates the woman who gives much without giving all; the woman hates the man who fears to take all while taking much. The sense of an unpaid debt leaves them permanently wrong toward each other. We touch here the secret source of those wonderful acrimonies which are often disclosed among persons whose lives had seemed an open book. I should add that in these affairs the woman is always more bitter and unforgiving than the man. With that special divination reserved to your adorable sex, you will readily understand why, Madame. . . .

Let me conclude, dear unknown Friend, by asking of you that which I fear to be impossible for us both. Remain unknown—unseen—unapproachable; yet a light in the shadow, a hope in the emptiness of barren years, a cordial to the often weary heart and drooping spirit! Let me worship you in secret—at once a glory and an illusion—like the unknown masterpiece of Balzac's painter. Let us, even like that infatuated artist, wise with the privilege of genius, forbid ourselves a meeting, a disclosure which could only put an end to our dream. Be and forever remain the unknown masterpiece of my soul!

Write to me sometimes, but . . . even better . . . learn to speak to me in the Silence . . . this is in truth the test

of that higher love to which we both aspire. Do not, I pray you, ask me to come to see you . . . ah, my God! why did you send that picture? . . . Rather send the voiceless assurance of your love to me as from a convent sanctuary whose high walls and vigilant guardians keep us forever apart.

Can you obey me in all this?

"Yes!" I hear you cry, with a dolorous and passionate eagerness. But even in the accents of that solemn pledge of renunciation, I detect the tone with which you will welcome me to your arms, and I know my feet to be set in the ways that lead to you!

II

WHEN the writer had traced the last word of the foregoing letter, his brow was a little pale from the effort of composition and also from the emotion which his thoughts had induced.

Sinking back in the deep study chair, he clasped his hands above his head with an habitual gesture, and said to himself in a half-vexed way:

"I swear this foolishness gets a man in spite of himself. No aid to amour so potent as the imagination!"

At that moment the wife of his bosom entered the room and kissed him lightly on the forehead.

Then, with conjugal assurance, picking up the scattered sheets on his writing table, she glanced carelessly over them.

"Ah," she remarked indifferently, in no wise affected by the real or simulated passion of the written words, "so the women of unsatisfied yearnings are after you again? Poor dear!—what a bore to have to write to such people."

"My love," replied her husband, a little wearily, "when they stop writing at last it will mean trouble of a more serious kind, for I shall then know that I have lost my 'punch.'"

"Ye-s," she assented abstractedly, still looking through the manuscript; "but her picture that you speak of so warmly—where is it?"

And her tone became staccato all of a sudden, seemed to admit of no trifling.

"My dear," he rejoined in a conciliatory fashion, "I did not want a recurrence of—you know what—(he winced as he spoke) and so I destroyed it."

Their eyes fully met and she held his long, but he did not waver.

"You are a dear," she said, after a moment's hesitation, "and also—though I your wife say it—an artist!"

WHEN a man loves a woman, he usually makes a fool of himself; but when a woman loves a man, she usually makes a fool of the man.

THE only silly thing about a man's effort to keep his wife and sweetheart apart is his belief that they don't realize the existence of each other.

THE greatest friendship will always be found between two people who understand and respect each other's dishonesty.

THE DEVIL SLAYER

By Ben Hecht

THE Rev. Lloyd Blop had been after me for three years to lead him unto one of those places where White Slavers drop drugged cherries into the country girl's first cocktail.

For three years this holy man had haunted me to take him behind the scenes of Sodom, behind the masks of Gomorrah. His soul hungered after the hiding places of the Devil. His sword thirsted for the Godless grottos beyond the Ten Commandments.

If ye know not the Evangels of today, then ye know not the Rev. Lloyd Blop. If ye know not the saintly crew which is fast hymning the vice dens and beer saloons out of the world, which is fast purging us of original sin, then my fable is lost upon ye, if fable it is, and I bid ye turn to some tale of the Ouija board or some simpler chronicle of pure love that riseth triumphant on beautiful legs above the trials and waggeries of the world.

The Reverend Blop, I think, however, is familiar to you if you be still so unregenerate as to turn periodically for solace to such statistics as are the last strongholds of Satan. For ten years he has been active in my parish. I remember him as a child, tall, fearless, with an indomitable, a remorseless, an awesome urge against evil. No league in our neighborhood for higher living, purer thought, sweeter souls, has been complete without his inspiring presence. No club or society, *verein* or association having for its ideal the uprooting of Hell has been without his prolific guidance.

Marriage will some day unite the reverend and myself. He will be as a father to me. I shall be as a son to him. And then, as he has prayed, I shall help him complete his work. I shall initiate him into the lairs of the cloven hoof. I shall be his pilot through the roof garden infernos, through the lurid spaces where souls writhe and laugh in sin. The two of us are to go through the world gathering statistics for the annual report of the Associated Deacons and Deaconesses Moral Improvement League. I shall not drink, or swear, or chew tobacco.

This for the future. This for the great day when Letitia Blop and I are made as one, man and wife, joined and inseparable. So I had determined. Thus I had for three years coddled my spirit for the big reform. I had made my peace with myself. I had vowed to keep the faith into which wedlock cast me.

But always I had stood firm on the ground that the Reverend and his forces of good would have to struggle on without my support during the remaining period of my celibacy.

II

WHAT warped fate has led me to quest the hand of the sainted daughter of a sainted father I know not. What fantastic destiny has thrown me across the path of the Associated Deacons and Deaconesses Moral Improvement League passes my understanding.

Perhaps there was something Quixotic about my holding out against the reverend, against the league for these three years. Yet I deem it had its noble side.

To betray my favorite *Weinstuben*, my favorite cabarets and dance halls into the hands of these Galahads, after all, smacked of treason. They had been my nurse, my parent, my haven and my joy. In them I learned a part of the mysteries which are not divine. Through them I was taught to read in the book of life such things as are not in the curriculum of the professors or the literature of the Republic.

I withstood the reverend. I lied, I shifted. I spoke of dangers, trap doors, yeggmen, cunning varlets.

But my arguments were only fuel to the virtuous fires in the reverend's soul.

And then there was Letitia. Young, slender, fair haired and grey eyed, etherally winsome, gentle—ah, the woman tempted me.

"If you will do these things for father after we are married," she saith, "why not now, when they are *so* important."

More and more weakly I replied,

"When we are married, yes. I will do this thing then. I will ferret out for your sainted parent the flesh pots. I will show unto him those places for which the grapes of wrath are stored. But now let us think of happier things. Let us think of love—of pure joys."

III

If you will explain to me why I am in love with Letitia I will give you a free life membership into the Exalted Order of Modern Woodmen. And I will buy you an ax to carry in parades. She has forbidden me to read all books written by Theodore Dreiser and Remy De Gourmont. She has prevailed upon me to write parables for the church entertainments, to admit that Henry W. Longfellow is the greatest poet in the world next to John Bunyan. And further, she coerced,, wielded, pouted, sicced and distressed me into revealing to her father those sinister retreats after which his sword thirsted!

And yet I love her.

Of such inexplicable muddles are the mysteries of love composed.

"My son," said the reverend when I made known my abdication, "for I may now call you son—as you are already son to me in the spirit—I would like you to take me to the worst haunts you know. Do not be afraid. I have seen enough of life to be prepared for anything."

He favored me with a knowing grimness in his eye.

"I am aware of what goes on in the vicious dens. I have visited scores of them in company with other members of our League. But it is now my desire to penetrate those fastnesses so cunningly barred to us who labor for good. I do not hold it against you when I say that you can show me the way. Your conduct during the past three years has been-er-exemplary. But, no doubt, as a man of the town, you know of things and places which have escaped the knowledge of us who are steeped in more spiritual pursuits."

I am, by the way, a critic. I criticise things for a newspaper. I have a column all to myself through which I daily instruct the public in what to think, say about books, talk about art. I am a slave to the confusing stupidity of my paper. I am a chattel to the astounding policies of its owner. But this is no place to inform you of my grievances. Another time, another page.

The Rev. Mr. Blop seized my hand and shook it in solemn holy compact. There in his study overlooking the stained glass windows of his church I was thus consecrated to the work of the Associated Deacons and Deaconesses Moral Improvement League. We journeyed forth that night in search of the Yellow Tavern, late the property of one Tony Mallato.

IV

The Yellow Tavern was situated in a leering byway of the city known as Plymouth Court. It was off the main streets of travel. It was in a basement. Tony Mallato was my friend. He

trusted me. When I thirsted he gave me drink. When I hungered he gave me food. When I would be regaled by visions of joy he brought them out and caused them to sing and to dance and to wear coy, furtive garments. For all this I paid him, but still remained his debtor.

Of all the old timers, Jones, Luxbaum, Collinemo, Schwartz, Pexler, he alone remained. The others had fallen before the apologetic wrath of the police. In their places had risen a tribe of decorous caterers, a swarm of song boosters, a horde of unscrupulous Barnums who had transformed the familiar, lovable scenes into a Bohemia of the *bourgoisie*.

Tony Mallato alone remained. Police captains loved him. Politicians called him brother. He was immune. The tides of reform broke impotent against his door. And from within continued the sounds of intelligent revelry. There were there violins which played delicately, girls who danced divinely, beer which sparkled with a legendary sparkle and a certain vulgarity, a choice vulgarity—the vulgarity of trenchermen and the happy damned. And he trusted me!

To this day I backslide. When I think upon Tony Mallato doubts assail me. Pangs annoy me. I shed a fleshly tear and wince in memory of my betrayal of the fellow.

Thither we journeyed. Some perverse enthusiasm urged me on.

Tony himself opened the door for me.

He looked askance upon my companion.

I gave him the smile of Judas.

"A friend," I said.

Tony nodded.

"Welcome, sir," he said with that true hospitality which was his.

We entered. We sat down at my favorite table. The clock pointed the hour of eleven and already the night's festivities were launched. About us were grouped laughing men, laughing women. In front of us danced a pair who would have put the Castles to shame. The sound of music was in the air, the smell of beer and the spirit of comradeship.

"So this is it," said the reverend, casting an avid eye upon the scene. "And to think, I fondly imagined that such places had been wiped out!"

I had to persuade him to order drink.

"Without drink," I pointed out, "you will be suspected, you will be murdered."

Indeed the feeling of guilt which had come upon me brought with it a low cowardice. I imagined our mission apparent to the eye of these honest fellows. I felt the heart of Tony Mallato breaking already with the knowledge of my perfidy. So we ordered drink. A small, unvanquished devil inspired me.

"The beer here," I said in a whisper, "is vile. It is a peculiar, a distinctive and deceitful beer. It intoxicates, maddens the blood. We will order whiskey. The whiskey is mild. It is harmless.

"Two whiskies," I hissed to Gustave the waiter.

They came. We drank. The music swelled. The laughter grew. We drank again, the reverend to avoid suspicion, I to drown a certain squeamishness, nay, cowardice and remorse which were fast throttling me and rendering me pale. The reverend was for taking notes. I fought him.

"Our memories," I said, "will be sufficient. You will see things here which will be burned into your soul."

The reverend's luck was with him. He saw a man kiss a woman at an adjoining table.

"White slavers," he breathed softly into my ear.

I nodded.

"The place is full of them," I countered.

I pointed out Bill Harkson, the foreman of our composing room. He is my friend. I indicated Jim Willoughby, manager of the Washington Market. He has bought me dinners. He has loaned me money. My conscience-

less finger singled out Harry Briggs, curator of the Wilson Park Museum. I have cherished him for years.

"White Slavers," I repeated, and the reverend smiled grimly.

I insisted on a flow of drinks, a continuity of drinks. Suspicion had to be averted. I would not see the life of him who was to be father to me endangered.

At the fourth drink Rev. Blop was for leaving. He had seen enough.

"Ha," I snorted. "It hasn't really begun yet. Wait!"

His eyes opened wide. They were the eyes of a child—in four drinks.

And then she who had been dancing came to sit at our table.

V

With the instinct of her kind she joyously flounced down beside the reverend and hailed him as "Papa."

A look of mingled elation and violent reproof flashed into the holy man's visage.

"Wine," I growled desperately, "Wine. Gustave, bring wine. Bottles!"

The clock pointed the hour twelve. Tony Mallato slapped us on the back, the two of us, the reverend and me. He bought us wine. Harry Briggs approached and wrung our hands. He summoned for us wine. Jim Willoughby descended upon us with further libations.

Around us rose the melodies of joy, the cacophony of mirth and wit and lusty souls. Before our eyes man and woman revelled in the true basement bacchanalia. Heavy footed yeomen arose and cavorted in the dance, such cavortings as would have rejoiced the heart of Ben Johnson.

We sang; the reverend, Gladys—she of the dance—and the pack of us.

We lifted our disassociated voices in chorus.

It was "Blop, old boy," and "Blop, old sport," and a kiss from Gladys, an embrace from Mr. Willoughby.

Knowing in my heart what portended, I struggled to make this last, the fatal, carousal one which would be remembered even in the annals of the Yellow Tavern.

Slowly as I watched the reverend, however, a hope crept into my soul.

Never had I seen the man in such a guise, never imagined him in such fettle. The elegance which had distinguished him for years melted gradually into a fine heartiness. The poise, the grimness of eye, the remorseless spirit, the unsullied fragrance of the man underwent an equally remarkable change. They fell from him one by one. I perceived him naked, as it were, stripped of his armor. I perceived him dancing in the arms of Gladys, yodelling unintelligible ditties which savored of the pulpit only as a cordial savors for the first brief moment of attack, of medicine.

The hope grew. He who had come to vanquish had remained to pray. Not my conversion but his. Not Tony Mallato's doom but the doom of the League.

Such notions burst into luxurious bloom in my heart. Shouting, laughing, dancing, we embraced each other, toasted each other's health and morals.

It was my hour of triumph.

The clock pointed the hour of one.

"Shay," the reverend cried out across the room, "wheresh boss?"

Herr Mallato appeared.

"Drinksh everybody," thundered the reverend. "White Shlavers—ev-body."

They came.

"Now breth'rn," resumed the reverend in splendid tone, "we drink to downfall wickedness. Ev'body."

Six glasses lifted. Six shouts were raised. Wickedness fell.

Then it was the man's desire to deliver a sermon. We gathered around him as he began in a rambling baritone a monstrous burlesque upon the ways of virtue—at least so it seemed to us there. His faltering thickened speech was punctuated by howls of glee. When he stumbled in the mist of a particularly fervid flight, stumbled and collapsed into a chair, the hail fellows

swooped upon him and chanted his virtues in profound syllables.

"Close up soon," Herr Mallato suddenly announced. "Almost two, gentlemen."

And it was—almost two, almost dawn. I turned my back upon further proferings. It behooved me to remain sober sufficiently to complete the great work that had been started in the Yellow Tavern of Tony Mallato. I listened to the reverend raise an indignant voice in protest. I heard his stentorian tones inveigh against the manners, the morals, the ethics of a man who would turn his guests into the street.

"Bring nozzer drink, ev'body," he commanded. Tony Mallato relented. He winked at me. I winked back.

It was dim and silent in the street when we had spoken the last elaborate farewell, shaken the last loving hand. The reverend leaned heavily upon me. Strange inarticulate noises came from him.

"Won'ful plash," he mumbled. "White Slav's. Ev'thing. Won'ful plash."

He sighed a fulsome sigh. We progressed homeward, to my home. It was there I would complete the work, point out to the reverend in the light of day the great wrong he had been bent upon, recall to him the honest joys he had enjoyed.

It was difficult to undress the man. He struggled with me. He climbed upon my sideboard and waved a decanter at me. He draped himself in the bed-quilt and insisted upon playing Indian. I persevered. I induced him to remove his shoes. He did and hurled one jovially out of the window. I argued him into doffing his coat. But he broke into a dance and was for returning immediately to the Tavern and having a heart-to-heart talk with Gladys.

"White Slav'rs," he began to bellow, and I was forced to leap upon him and bring him to the earth.

When I had silenced him he grew terribly docile. He began to weep. He spoke of "Briggsh" and "Will'by." He longed to know them better, to go into their homes and meet their children. For fifteen minutes I listened to his disjointed lamentations and then he fell asleep—we fell asleep. I remember seeing him last curling up on the floor, his head against a leg of my best chair and smiling seraphically.

VI

It was late in the day when I awoke. I was alone.

The reverend had somehow risen before me and departed. I grieved as I remembered the sentences I had stored up for the completion of the great work.

But a peculiar illness fell upon me, a mysterious blight which assailed the regions of my abdomen. I lingered in my chambers and decided to see the reverend on the morrow.

Thus I coddled myself in my arm chair, read and meditated and resumed my bed at an early hour to arise joyous and refreshed.

The memory of the Yellow Tavern came to me like some grotesque dream. I donned my clothes and slipped forth for breakfast.

Over my cereal at the corner restaurant I glanced idly at the morning paper. A headline caught my eye. For the moment thought left me, the power to react vanished.

I sat vacant, stunned.

There confronting me was written in great black letters the legend

REV. LLOYD BLOP LEADS NEW REFORM ATTACK ON NOTORIOUS RESORT

TONY MALLATO'S YELLOW TAVERN RAIDED BY POLICE, LED BY MINISTER

And there followed a tale which brought vicious chills into my heart and vanquished my appetite.

Close to the top of the newspaper

column was a long interview with the reverend. I read—

"The Associated Deacons and Deaconesses Moral Improvement League have secured the services of an investigator who has given it information concerning the haunts of wickedness which have been permitted to flourish by the police against the ordinances of the city. In company with this investigator I myself visited one of the most notorious of these last night. I saw there sights which would appall the most callous eye. I heard there words which would have brought the blush of shame to the cheeks of a bad woman. Low men and women mingled freely. Indecency does not express the scene. Depravity gives no clew to it. That such plague spots should be allowed to thrive is a violation not only of the law but of the precepts of God. Drunkenness, debauchery, sights which beggar description, went on before my eyes. Men steeped in whiskey, rolling drunken upon the floor, women in the same deplorable—

I read no further. I arose heavily from the table. In that moment was born in me the realization that the forces expurgating this world were too vast, too intricate for my feeble talents.

I boarded a car and journeyed to the reverend's home.

He greeted me, solemnly, yet joyously.

"You see, my son," he said. "With your aid, what we have done. The League is proud of you."

I nodded.

A tear came into my eye.

In the doorway I espied Letitia. She advanced upon me with a gracious perturbation.

"I am so glad to see you," she cried. "Father told me you had been injured."

"Injured?" I echoed vaguely.

The Rev. Blop's calmest, most stentorian tones fell upon my ear.

"I refer to the attack the man Mallato made upon us," he explained.

I bowed my head.

"Poor father received a fearful blow on the brow," continued the irrepressible Letitia. "I kept replacing cold compresses all yesterday."

I gathered the maiden into my arms, more to silence her than from sentiment.

"Oh, you are wonderful," she whispered, "just as wonderful as father!"

We are to be married in September.

I SHALL MARRY RALPH

By Helen Hamilton

I SHALL marry Ralph.

. . . . . .

I do not love Ralph.

He sneezes when it is cold and perspires when it is hot.

He eats lobster noisily and sips cocktails.

He is friendly with waiters and ogles at young girls.

He moves his lips when he reads, cracks nuts with his teeth, and wears rubbers.

I do not love Ralph.

. . . . . .

I shall marry Ralph.

I shall marry him because he calls me *chic*.

I weigh two hundred.

L'AME DES CIERGES

By Clément Rochel

IL ne faut pas, dans les vieilles églises qui semblent sommeiller à l'ombre des vieux tilleuls de la place du village—il ne faut jamais éteindre les petits cierges qui brûlent comme des étoiles d'or derrière le maître-autel. . . .

Parce que, si les âmes de riches sont les étoiles que l'on voit au ciel, les petits cierges à flamme d'or sont les âmes des pauvres pour qui d'autres pauvres prient et versent des larmes. Et quand on éteint l'un de ces cierges, c'est une pauvre âme qui s'en va dans les chemins du ciel, d'où elle ne revient plus jamais.

Il y avait, une fois, une vieille femme, qui avait obtenu du curé la permission de vendre, aux gens pieux at affligés, de petits cierges que l'on faisait brûler derrière le maître-autel de l'église du village.

Mais cette vieille, au lieu d'être une bonne vieille, était avare et méchante. Elle était avare parce qu'elle avait eu souvent faim, et qu'elle craignait de voir revenir ses jours de misère; elle était méchante parce qu'elle avait beaucoup souffert dans sa vie, et aussi, peut-être, parce qu'elle était en deuil de son petit qui, depuis de longues années, était parti comme soldat au service du Roi.

Et chaque jour, en songeant à son petit, dont elle n'avait point de nouvelles, elle se répétait à elle seule: "Reviendra-t-il, mon 'drôle'? . . . Ha! pauvre . . . reviendra-t-il?"

Et, en attendant son retour sans l'espérer, l'avare et méchante vieille femme vendait, pour quelques sous, aux paysannes pieuses et affligées, de petits cierges qui brûlaient dans l'ombre avec une flamme d'or. . . .

. . . Il ne faut jamais éteindre les cierges qui brûlent derrière le maître-autel. . . .

Or, advint qu'un jour la jeune fille du gros Jourdillaud, le fermier du Pimpidour, vint trouver la vieille et lui dit:

—Ma bonne dame, je veux faire brûler un cierge, un beau cierge comme celui-ci. . . .

La vieille le regarda avec son méchant sourire:

—Et pourquoi, ma belle demoiselle, voulez-vous faire brûler un si beau cierge? lui demanda-t-elle.

La jeune fille hésita et finit par lui répondre, à voix basse, comme au confessionnal:

—Parce que la guerre va finir, que mon fiancé va revenir au pays, et que, puisqu'il a évité jusqu'ici tous les périls, je ne voudrais pas qu'il lui arrivât malheur.

La vieille femme prit le cierge, le piqua sur le candélabre, et l'alluma.

Mais, quand la jeune fille l'eut payé et sen fut allée, heureuse et confiante en son offrande, la vieille, qui était méchante et avare, se dit:

—C'est pitié de brûler un si beau cierge dans l'ombre du maître-autel!

Elle le souffla et le mit de côté.

. . . Il ne faut jamais éteindre les cierges que l'on fait brûler à l'église.

C'était au soir de la dernière bataille.

Comme ils étaient vainqueurs, les soldats du Roi poussaient leurs ennemis, qui osaient à peine, en s'enfuyant, se retourner de temps à autre, pour tirer leurs derniers coups de feu.

Et, parmi les gens du Roi, il y avait un petit soldat qui si réjouissait en se disant:

—Maintenant, la guerre est finie. Bientôt, dans quelques jours, je vais embrasser ma vieille mère, que mon absence a rendue méchante, et revoir ma fiancée que j'aime tant!

Soudain, une détonation retentit. . . .

Et le petit soldat s'affaissa au milieu de ses compagnons. . . .

Alors, il perdit connaissance. . . .

Il lui sembla voir une petite étoile d'or qui vacillait dans l'ombre, et qui, brusquement, s'éteignit. . . .

C'était l'âme du petit soldat, qui s'envolait dans les chemins du ciel, d'où elle ne devait jamais, plus jamais revenir. . . .

Depuis, la vieille avare et méchante femme a cessé d'attendre le retour de son drôle; et la pauvre fiancée laisse chaque jour jaillir de ses yeux, avec ses larmes, un lambeau de son pauvre cœur. . . .

Il ne faut pas, dans les vieilles églises, souffler, même quand ils sont trop beaux, les cierges qui brûlent, avec une petite flamme d'or, dans l'ombre du maître-autel. . . .

LES LANGUES DE LA NUIT

By Florian Parmentier

Les feuilles innombrables
Des arbres
Sont les langues qui disent l'ennui
De la nuit.

Passant, fuis les soliloques
De la forêt:
Tu sentirais l'affliction des choses
Te pénétrer.

La nuit est une femme insidieuse:
Elle a des millions de langues!
Contre sa parole maleficieuse
Comment te défendre?

WHENEVER a woman asks "What time is it?" the answer is, "Time for me to be going."

THE psychological moment for a proposal is the moment the woman has decided on.

ESSAYS IN MINIATURE

By George Jean Nathan

I

An Essay on (English) Actors and the Art of Acting

MR. CYRIL MAUDE, the English actor who for the last two seasons has been playing in the United States, not long ago took vigorous exception to certain critical indictments of the so-called art of acting in general and of the so-called art of acting in particular as it concerned the leading woman actress of his company. This actress, asserted the critics, was an immature and incompetent performer; whereupon Mr. Maude waxed exceeding caustic. The actress in point, observed Mr. Maude bitingly, had had long training for and careful preparation in the difficult art of acting, otherwise assuredly he would not have permitted her to essay the important role to which in his company he had assigned her. The American public, he continued with much affection, would not have been so imposed upon by him. . . . The role in point was recently vacated by the actress. It is at present being interpreted by a young woman whom Mr. Maude conscripted from the cloakroom of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York, where the young woman was employed as a hat-check girl.

II

An Essay on Banality

THERE is room for banality in the theater. It is less a thing for critical groan and frown than one is often persuaded to believe. The theater is an institution wherein one seeks sanctuary from the furors and stressful inconstancy of life, wherein one may sit before the doings of a mock world and sigh oneself into a pleasurable temporary forgetfulness and reverie. Life itself, and the outside world, thrill and torment the individual with their ceaseless changes and mist enwrapt adventures and somnabulisms—a shifting panorama of art, loves, business, coincidences, triumphs, defeats, fears and hopes. From all this the theater offers a refuge. And that refuge may, obviously enough, be had only in spectacles of an antithetical dulness, flatness and stupidity.

One may amuse and divert oneself only by more or less violent contrasts. Napoleon, after the battle of Abukir, forgot himself in watching a cock fight.

III

An Essay on Tragedy

THE tragedy of drama and the tragedy of life are often as far removed as the poles. The tears of a thousand dying Camilles are as a light fall of April dew compared with the tears of a young mother on the day they cut off her little boy's curls.

IV

An Essay on Patriotism in the Playhouse

I DO not censoriously object, as do some, to standing in a theater when the orchestra strikes up "The Star Spangled Banner." My objection is rather that this should be regarded as the only occasion on which a good citizen should get to his feet. I believe the good American should stand in rever-

ence and pride not only when the national anthem is played, but also when one of his countrymen writes a score as good as "Babes in Toyland," when one of his countrywomen writes a comedy as good as "Old Lady 31," when one of his countrymen risks what little money he has in the world on a manuscript like "The Poor Little Rich Girl" . . . I get to my feet when the orchestra plays "The Star Spangled Banner," but I also stand when it plays almost anything at all from the works of Josef Haydn.

V

An Essay on Fame

THE famous comedienne, suffering a sudden cramp, made a face.

"How wonderfully she expresses the feeling of homesickness," observed the gentleman seated in E 10.

"How wonderfully she expresses the feeling of wanderlust," observed the gentleman seated in M 7.

VI

An Essay on Satire

THE seat of the trousers pursuing a slapstick.

VII

An Essay on Cheese

ONE often wonders at the genesis of the notion that cheese is funny, and that an allusion to it should infallibly cause merriment in a theater audience. It cannot be because of the perfume of the cheese: for an allusion to the Swiss or Gorgonzola cheeses, which are practically without bouquet, invariably brews a louder laughter than an allusion to such more vehement cheeses as the Limburger or Camembert. Nor can it be because the word cheese itself has a comic sound: cheese is a word intrinsically not nearly so funny in sound as, for example, the words chow chow and jelly, which, though of an exotic Chinese quality, are unavailing for purposes of laughter in the playhouse. Granting that cheese is a ludicrous creature, why should Brie be funny and Liederkranz, which is much like it, unfunny? What, in short, makes an audience twit the Swiss, Limburger, Gorgonzola and Roquefort cheeses and be urbane and gracious toward the Edam, Münster, Stilton, Cream, Port-du-Salut and Hand cheeses? That the laughter of an audience is conditioned on the effluvium of the cheese and that it is therefore the effluvium and not the cheese that amuses the audience, one is indisposed to grant. The empyreuma, or sachet, of the finnan haddie, for instance, is of two-fold the eloquence of even the Camembert—yet the audience does not hold jubilee upon a communication regarding the finnan haddie, nor for that matter even the finnan haddie's more vociferous confrère, the smoked herring. Again, is cheese even in private life so great a spitzbub as, let us for example say, the small yellow tomato served ubiquitously among the *hors d'œuvres?* Is it not a better behaved, a more ruly, a less gushing and more modish fellow? There is something wrong somewhere. A cabal, mayhap; a conspiracy, an intrigue. Being unable to get at the bottom of it, I suppose we might as well blame the Shuberts.

VIII

An Essay on a Novel Dramatic Situation

A HUSBAND, returning unexpectedly from his club—he was not expected until after midnight—finds his wife and his best friend bored to death with each other.

IX

An Essay on Mixed Identity

WHEN plays having mixed identity as their theme fail, they fail not because the audience is unwilling to grant that a man might conceivably be unable to distinguish his wife from her delectable twin sister, but because it is unwilling to grant that the man would conceivably try.

X

An Essay on American Adaptations of French Plays

CONTRARY to the common opinion, the average American adaptation of a French play fails not because it deodorizes the original (and so perverts the original and makes it a thing ridiculous), but because it actually transforms the French play into a more immoral document than it was in its original form. True, this process is not intentional, but the result is the same.

When, for example, the American adaptor adapts a *liaison* into a mere hot kiss, he forgets that his audience now sees the hot kiss in action where in the original manuscript, since it is impossible to depict a *liaison* in action upon the open stage, the French audience saw nothing.

Again, when the American adaptor adapts a boudoir into a library he is compelled to make the characters go much further than in the original manuscript, since it is clearly out of the question for him in a library scene to resort to the original device of hiding from the audience the boudoir transgressions of the principal characters by a momentary dropping of the curtain.

Still again, when the American adaptor turns a man's mistress into his aunt, he is guilty of an offensive quasi-Oedipus Rex complex in the minds of that considerable portion of his audience that has already read the plot of the original French play in the newspapers and magazines and somehow cannot entirely get it out of its mind.

And still again, when the American adaptor adapts the illegitimate baby completely out of the play, the audience which would have forgiven the heroine's morals in the original manuscript on the ground that she was now a mother bursting with mother-love, in the adaptation views the heroine as a brazen, evil-minded, selfish hussy with no morals at all and absolutely no *raison d'être*.

XI

An Essay on Sentimentality

WHY it is that we Americans, a nation of sentimentalists, should demand sentimentality in our theater is not easy of decipherment. The one fact does not dovetail with the other so closely as some believe. The theater, first and last, is a harbour of diversion. Like cannot divert like. An egoist hates an egoist. A man's sweetheart does not look like his wife. A restaurant with home-cooking would fail in a week. A soldier, on furlough, does not spend his time in a shooting gallery. A chorus girl doesn't marry a chorus man. . . . The French, a nation as sentimental as we, patronize most liberally plays that are the reverse of sentimental. The Germans, an unsentimental nation, cry copiously into their Pilsner when a *mädel* in a cabaret hits the quiver note in a barber-shop melody like "Puppchen" . . .

XII

An Essay on Poetry

ALL the poems written since the beginning of the war have in the bulk of them not half the poetry of a letter of a single sentence received not long ago from an anonymous student in the Officers' Reserve Corps at the Plattsburg encampment by my confrère, F. P. Adams. The letter: "The field where we're doing bayonet practice has got a lot of violets and dandelions on it."

XIII

An Essay on Esthetics

No woman who weighs over one hundred and thirty-five pounds should be permitted to play a dramatic role. Women who weigh over one hundred and thirty-five pounds are comediennes —occasionally intentional.

XIV

An Essay on the Native Appraisal of Art

AN actress is held in esteem by the

American public in the degree that it believes her to be a virtuous woman.

XV

An Essay on the Effect of the War Upon the Drama

HALF the critics contend that the effect of the war will be to bring about a more serious and sombre native drama, since war makes persons meditative and melancholy. The other half contend that the effect of the war will be to bring about a lighter and more frivolous native drama, since war makes persons eager to forget its horrors. The truth is probably that the war will have no effect whatever on the native drama. The men who go to war will, obviously, be unable to go to the theater. The women whose men go to war and suffer its terrors will not feel like going to the theater. The men who do not go to war and the women who have no men in the war will go to the theater much as they have gone in the days before the war, to see the same kind of thing they then went to see. And the theatrical managers and showwrights will continue to give them that same kind of thing. . . . If Dunsany should write a different kind of thing we will, war or no war, effect of war or no effect of war, still have to change cars three times and then walk eight blocks before we are able to get to where it is playing.

XVI

An Essay on Music

A MUFFLED drum . . . the soft sobbing of a pretty woman . . . a steamboat whistle, far off, at twilight . . . a church bell in the valley on a Sunday morning in May . . . a baby sucking its great toe . . . a lawn-mower on a warm, still afternoon . . . a paper knife slitting open the envelope of a *billet doux* . . . the music of the band on the pier becoming completely inaudible as the steamer, gathering speed, moves out of New York harbour . . .

XVII

An Essay on Vaudeville

A gentleman orders a mutton chop. Upon its being served to him, he finds it ill prepared and sends it back. The next day it is served as a course luncheon in the servants' hall.

XVIII

An Essay on Journalistic Dramatic Criticism

Excerpts from the London papers on the day following the initial presentation, in 1891, of Henrik Ibsen's play "Ghosts":

"Unutterably offensive . . . abominable."—*Standard.*

"Naked loathsomeness. . . . Most dismal and repulsive production."—*Daily News.*

"Revoltingly suggestive and blasphemous."—*Chronicle.*

"A piece to bring the Stage into disrepute and dishonour with every right-thinking man and woman."—*Lloyd's.*

"Most loathsome of all Ibsen's plays. . . . Garbage and offal."—*Truth.*

"As foul and filthy a concoction as has ever been allowed to disgrace the boards of an English theater. . . . Dull and disgusting. Nastiness and malodorousness laid on thickly as with a trowel."—*Era.*

"Ibsen's positively abominable play. . . . An open drain; a loathsome sore unbandaged; a dirty act done publicly; a lazar-house with all its doors and windows open. Gross, almost putrid indecorum. . . . Literary carrion. . . . Perilous nuisance."—*Daily Telegraph.*

Excerpts from the New York papers on the day following the initial presentation, in 1917, of Miss Jane Cowl's play, "Lilac Time":

"A vital, powerful and significant drama."

"A remarkable feat of dramatic writing, rich in purpose and forceful in design."

"A rare play . . . a credit to the stage."

"A spiritual drama, fresh, vigorous in ideas, uplifting."

"Eloquent, moving . . . an honorable and impressive dramatic work."

"*Some* show!"

XIX

Another Essay on Sentimentality

A PROOF of the incurable sentimentality of American theatergoers is to be had in the case of Mr. Bert Williams. Williams, six or seven years ago, showed promise as a comedian. But each year since, he has revealed himself (possibly because of dearth of proper material, possibly not) as an increasingly inept and unimaginative performer. Yet each year he is proclaimed a better and better comedian, and applauded the more and more, merely because he is a negro.

XX

An Essay on Dramatic Criticism

Two gentlemen of the assizes met one evening upon the highway with a dog. The dog, a friendly creature, barked amiably at the gentlemen, whereupon the twain smiled and bent to pat the dog. Stooping thus, one of the gentlemen issued suddenly a cry of alarm.

"Fie!" he cried to his colleague, "I see upon the creature's hide a flea!"

The other adjusted his glass and scrutinized the beast closely.

"That," he observed, with the mien of one not to be contradicted, "that, sir, is not a flea. That is a louse!"

XXI

An Essay on the Motion Pictures

THE widely held opinion that the motion pictures are the fatuous things they are primarily because their stories are composed by ill-paid, talentless hacks, is absurd. Joseph Conrad's "Youth" or "Heart of Darkness," made into a motion picture by Conrad himself, would prove on the screen as sorry stuff as the *opera* of any of the current hack scenario gentlemen. One can't play Hauptmann's "Hannele" in a tent nor Brahms' violin concerto on an oboe. One can't sense the spell of Salzburg through the windows of the Orient Express. The real trouble with the motion pictures lies not in their stories, but in the persons who produce those stories. These misguided persons imagine it to be the duty of their trade to elevate the motion pictures, to make of them a something better than they are and should be, when in point of fact they occupy in the amusement world the same position as dime novels, vaudeville shows, cabaret music, billiards and the free lunch. For such divertissements there is an ample, appropriate and remunerative public. Why, therefore, posture the motion picture against the legitimate stage or the library? It is not essential to a bank's success that its receiving teller be able to impart information on Richard Strauss, Cézanne or Anatole France.

XXII

An Essay on a Pretty Little Blonde Girl Observed in One of the Season's Plays

Sunlight on pale blue velvet. . . .

XXIII

An Essay on Melodrama

Melodrama: farce acted by the requisite number of college professors.

XXIV

An Essay on Mr. J. Hartley Manners

CHAPTER I

THE consensus of the New York reviewers after witnessing Mr. Manners' war play, "Out There": "It is at once surprising and pleasant to observe that Mr. Manners, in 'Out There,' reveals a fresh point of view and an inventiveness not even remotely promised by his previous banal work for the theater."

CHAPTER II

THE settings, characters, theme, central episode and treatment of Mr. Manners' war play, "Out There," presented initially in the Globe Theater, New York, March 27, 1917:

Settings—Act I. A habitation in the East End of London. Act II. A base hospital "somewhere in France." Act

III. Scene I same as Act I, scene I; scene II, a public place.

Characters—(1) a Cockney prize-fighter, a slacker, who sees the error of his ways and enlists; (2) a Cockney slavey who aches to do her bit and who goes to the front to become a nurse; (3) the comic Cockney mother of the prize-fighter; (4) the head nurse in the base hospital; (5) the kindly old surgeon-major; (6) the various types of soldiers in the British forces on the firing line; etc.

Theme: How people bear themselves in the swiftly changing, violent fortunes of war and the effect of war upon them.

Central episode: The slavey, serving as a ward maid of all work in the base hospital, sees a wounded man brought in. The wounded man turns out to be her own sweetheart.

Treatment: A realism of men and women living too strenuously not to be natural; in shape, a string of vivid little scenes.

Chapter III

The settings, characters, central episode and treatment of Gladys Unger's and A. Neil Lyons' war play, "London Pride," presented initially in Wyndham's Theater, London, December 6, 1916:

Settings (in part)—Act I. A habitation in the East End of London. Act II. A base hospital "somewhere in France." Act III. Scene I, a public place; scene II, same as Act I, scene I.

Characters—(1) a Cockney prize-fighter, a slacker, who sees the error of his ways and enlists; (2) a Cockney slavey who aches to do her bit and who goes to the front to become a nurse; (3) the comic Cockney mother of the prize-fighter; (4) the head nurse in the base hospital; (5) the kindly old sergeant-major; (6) the various types of soldiers in the British forces on the firing line; etc.

Theme: "How people bear themselves in the swiftly changing, violent fortunes of war and the effect of war upon them."—From the review in the *London Daily Telegraph,* Dec. 7, 1916.

Central episode: The slavey, serving as a ward maid of all work in the base hospital, sees a wounded man brought in. The wounded man turns out to be her own sweetheart.

Treatment: "A realism of men and women living too strenuously not to be natural; in shape, a string of vivid little scenes."—From the review in the *London Daily Telegraph,* Dec. 7, 1916.

Chapter IV

XXV

An Essay on Classic Dancing

Stepping on a sharp pebble while taking the Kneipp cure . . . hesitations at the bathtub on a December morning . . . a Seeley dinner, without champagne.

XXVI

An Essay on Prejudice

The dramatic critic who is without prejudice is on a plane with the general who does not believe in taking human life. He is unfit for his job, out of place, a strayed buffoon. To be without prejudice is to be without learning, without viewpoint, without philosophy, without courage; in short, a mental neutral. The ideal critic is the critic who venerates like a Turk, who hates like a Corsican—and who knows no compromise on middle ground. His estimate of art is his estimate of Madeira: it is either good or bad. There is neither such a thing

as fair art nor fair Madeira. His business is not to encourage signs of talent. His business is simply with talent or lack of talent. He is not a school teacher: he is the school teacher's husband. He is not a youth, open to this change and to that, but a man whose mind has walked the Louvres of the world and is just a bit tired. He is not a judge: he is that which, being the lingering bloom of judgments long since withered, is harsher, more relentless than judge: he is reverie and reminiscence.

XXVII

An Essay on the Repertory System

THE best argument against the repertory system is that it elevates the actor over the play. It asks us at regular intervals to view not a play interpreted by a group of actors, but a group of actors interpreted by a play. The repertory system therefore fails in the same way that the Swoboda system fails. It strengthens the anatomy at the expense of the soul.

XXVIII

An Essay on the Current Era in Art

DESIGNATION for the present, or super-moral, period in American letters: the Y. M. C. A-ge.

XXIX

An Essay on Amour in the Theater

THE basic difference between a comic opera libretto and a drama is simply this: In a libretto the interest of everybody on the stage and of nobody in the audience is centered on the successful culmination of the hero's love affair. In drama the situation is the reverse.

XXX

An Essay on the Art of Burlesque

AN Ibsen play, preferably "Little Eyolf," played straight, with all the characters chewing gum.

XXXI

An Essay on the Dramatic Criticism of William Archer

THE theory that chicken stealing is a capital crime, and should be tried before the judges of the Supreme Court.

XXXII

An Essay on the Gallery

THE theatrical managers lament that the old gallery crowd no longer goes to the theater and that, as a consequence, the gallery is no longer occupied. They are wrong. The old gallery crowd still goes to the theater and the gallery is still occupied. Its name has merely been changed to orchestra.

XXXIII

An Essay on a Work of Art

A POET, unknown and unsung, wrote a beautiful play. Those who read the play felt strange tears creep into their eyes and odd little pullings at the strings of their hearts.

"This," they said, "is art."

And the news of the poet's beautiful play spread far. And it came in time to be produced upon the great highway of a city with a company of actors the very least of whom received as weekly emolument some nuggets nine hundred and more. And citizens traveled from ulterior Haarlm and the far reaches of Brukkelhyn and counties beyond the Duchy of Nhuyohrk to see the costly actors play the poet's work. And the citizens looked at one another sorely perplexed, for they felt no strange tears creep into their eyes nor odd pullings at the strings of their hearts.

"Art hell!" they said.

XXXIV

An Essay on the Drama of Henri Bernstein

THE drama of Henri Bernstein is the condensation of the protagonist's lifetime into two hours and the expansion of the theatergoer's two hours into a lifetime.

SI MUTARE POTEST AETHIOPS PELLUM SUAM . . .

By H. L. Mencken

TWO late books intrigue me, not only because they are of intrinsic virtue, but also and chiefly because they expose a problem that will haunt this great Calvinist republic, in the days to come, like a persistent glycosuria or night sweat. I allude, of course, to the race question, now beautifully expanding and mellowing, and in particular to that part of it which has to do with the niggero. What, ladies and gentlemen, in hell or out of it, are we to do with the Ethiop? Who shall answer the thunderous demands of the emerging coon? For emerging he is, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and there will come a morn, believe me or not, when those with ears to hear and hides to feel will discover that he is to be boohed and put off no longer—that he has at last got the power to exact a square answer, and that the days of his docile service as minstrel, torch and goat are done. When that morn dawns, I pray upon both knees, I shall be safe in the Alps, and not below the Potomac River, hurriedly disguised with burnt cork and trying to get out on the high gear. Soon or late, I agree with William Archer (see his "Through Afro-America," 1910) it will come to rough work—and perhaps sooner than most of us fancy. The Southerners, even the honest ones, have botched the business abominably, and unless Providence intervenes with a miracle I suspect that it will jolly well botch the South.

I speak, not as a villainous Yankee and Abolitionist, but as one of Southern birth, and of Southerners born. I was brought up (or, in the local dialect, raised) among darkeys; I played with darkey boys in my nonage; I know hundreds of darkeys today; I am on good terms with them; I have never had a serious quarrel with an individual among them. I thus qualify, I hope, as a Southern gentleman, or, at all events, as a Southerner. More, I am and always have been in favor of slavery, not only for blacks, but also for all save a small and shrinking minority of whites. Yet more, I regard Stonewall Jackson as a great general, and believe that Ben Butler has never reached heaven, and prefer batter-bread to *petit pain,* and voted for Bryan, and am sound on infant damnation and the crime of '73, and have the hookworm and used to write editorials for the Baltimore *Sunpaper.* I bore you with these qualifications in self-defense. It would shock and grieve me to be called a Yankee, and, what is worse, it would libel me. I hate everyone born north of the Mason and Dixon line, whether man or woman. I regard the surrender of General Robert E. Lee as the most calamitous human event since the discovery of America. I would rather be chained by the leg in the common jail of Yazoo City, Miss., fed only upon hoecake and coca-cola, than smothered in violets by all the gals of Boston. . . .

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the South has failed to solve the problem of the *Homo noir,* and that the completeness of its failure is growing more visible day by day. Not only is the coon not come to equilibrium; he is jumping up and rocking the boat more and more. For thirty or forty years after the war it was simply a question of how much should be given

to him—freely or haltingly, generously or grudgingly, as you choose. But now it is fast becoming a question of how much he will demand and take—if possible, peaceably; if not, by force. And why the change? Simply because the niggero has been making fast and secure progress, not in mere education, but in competence, in self-confidence, in wealth—because he has begun to find out that he can make his way, Southerners or no Southerners—because, in all that is essential and lasting, he has shown better progress than the Southern whites. A harsh fact, but still a fact. The South likes to think that it has recovered from the Civil War—the whole region, in truth, swarms with wind-machines who keep on trying to demonstrate it—but a glance at the evidence is enough to fill any impartial judge with doubts. Those four years were more terrible than anyone knew. They wiped out the old civilization, and they left the soil so sterile that a new one has never sprung up.

Consider, for example, Virginia—in the old days undoubtedly the premier American state, the mother of Presidents and statesmen, the hatchery of national ideas and ideals, the home of the first American university worthy of the name, the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the western world. Well, observe Virginia today. It is years since a first-rate man has come out of it; it is years since an idea has come out of it. The *ancien régime* went down the red gullet of war; the poor white trash are now in the saddle. Politics in Virginia are cheap, ignorant, parochial, idiotic; there is scarcely a man in office above the rank of a petty job-seeker; the political doctrine that prevails is made up of hand-me-downs from the bumpkinry of the Middle West—Bryanism, prohibition, vice crusading, all that sort of claptrap; the administration of the law is turned over to professors of Puritanism and espionage; a Washington or a Jefferson, dumped there by some act of God, would be denounced as a scoundrel and jailed overnight. Elegance, *esprit*, culture? Virginia has no art, no literature, no philosophy, no mind or aspiration of her own. Her education has sunk to the Baptist seminary level; not a single contribution to human knowledge has come out of her colleges in twenty-five years; she spends less than half upon her common schools, per capita, than any Northern state spends. In brief, an intellectual desert, a paradise of the fourth-rate. There remains, at the top, a ghost of the old urbanity, a bit wistful and infinitely charming. But there is no thought under it, no cultural pressure and vigor, no curiosity and enterprise. The mind of the state, as it is revealed to the nation, is pathetically naif and inconsequential; it no longer reacts with energy and elasticity to great problems; it seems fallen to the bombastic trivialities of the camp-meeting and the Chautauqua. A Lee or a Poe or a Jefferson would be almost as unthinkable in the Virginia of to-day as a Huxley or a Nietzsche in Nicaragua.

I choose the Old Dominion, not because I disdain it, but precisely because I esteem it. It is, by long odds, the most civilized of the Southern states, now as always. If one turns to such a commonwealth as Georgia the picture becomes far darker. Here the liberated lower orders of whites have borrowed the worst commercial bumptiousness of the Yankee and superimposed it upon a culture that, at bottom, is little removed from barbarism. Georgia is not only ignorant and stupid; it is vicious. A self-respecting and educated European, going there to live, would not only find intellectual stimulation utterly lacking; he would actually feel a certain insecurity. The Leo Frank affair was no isolated phenomenon, no accident; it fitted into its frame very snugly; it was a natural expression of Georgian ideas of the true, the good and the beautiful. There is a state with more than half the area of Italy and more population than either Denmark or Norway, and yet, in thirty years it has not produced a single first-class book or picture or poem or scientific discovery or political or philosophi-

cal idea, or other sound contribution to human advancement. If it had been destroyed by an earthquake in 1875, the world would be exactly where it is today. If the whole of its present population were to be transplanted to Mars tomorrow, the news would be of no more interest to civilization than the news that a distillery had burned down in Kentucky.

If you want to get some notion of the intellectual and social backwardness of Georgia, turn to the last edition of "Who's Who in America," and particularly to page 15, on which the assembled *aluminados* are sorted out according to their places of birth. Georgia, with a population of 2,609,121, contributes 243; Michigan, with a population of 2,810,173, contributes 551; Vermont, with a population of 355,956, contributes 363. But we forget that Georgia is half black—we must chalk off the Moors. Very well, let us match that half of Georgia which is white against that part of the northern populace which is at least half American. (Georgia herself has very few foreign whites.) The result is almost as striking. The 1,300,000 whites of Georgia contribute 242 Whoswhoistas; the 1,433,375 inhabitants of Massachusetts who have "one or both parents native" offer 2,002. In New Jersey (perhaps the least civilized Northern state) the 1,213,601 American and semi-American whites give "Who's Who" 501 names—more than twice as many as Georgia. Here, remember, I always regard birthplace, and not place of residence. Georgia is no new state; it had half a million population in 1825, and more than a million before the Civil War. Yet it is now left far behind, both relatively and actually, by such new states as Wisconsin, Iowa and Michigan, none of which got on its legs until after the war.

Apply any other test and you will unearth the same sluggishness. The Southern white is falling behind the procession; not only is the Northern white forging ahead of him, but also the Southern *procyon lotor*. I turn to page 68 of the third revised edition of Ely's "Outlines of Economics," just published, and find this:

> In the South during the last census decade the number of negro farmers increased more rapidly than the number of white farmers; the acreage of land operated by white farmers decreased while that operated by negro farmers increased 10 per cent; the value of farm land and buildings owned by whites increased 117 per cent, but the value of farm land and buildings owned by negroes increased 156 per cent; while the number of negro farm owners increased 17 per cent as contrasted with an increase of 12 per cent in the white owners of farms.

More, the niggero is making equal, if not actually greater strides, in commerce and industry. When he learns to read and write he no longer sets up shop as a shyster lawyer, a quack doctor or a grafting ecclesiastic; he applies himself to a trade, or opens a store, or begins swindling his fellow blacks with some banking or insurance scheme. The number of such enterprises increases enormously in all the Southern states; there are whole towns given over to darkey business, and soon there will be whole regions. And then? Well, and then the band will begin to play. The black has learned the capital lesson that property is necessary to self-respect, that he will never get anywhere so long as he is poor. Once he is secure in that department he will take up the business of getting back his plain constitutional rights. Will he produce leaders fit for so great and delicate a venture? The answer is held *in petto* by the gods—but it is not to be forgotten that he produced a leader fit for the work of preparation. The Southern whites have pondered and debated the negro question for fifty years; it has been their first and almost only permanent concern; they offer its difficulties as the explanation of all their lack of progress. But let us not forget here that it was a black man, Booker Washington, who worked out the only intelligible solution so far heard of, and that he forced the whites, for all the concentrated horsepower of their joint meditation, to accept it. Booker liberated the niggeroes

by teaching them the value of skill and money. Some later prophet may go a step further. The day he arises I shall retire to Interlaken.

All these lofty thoughts are inspired by the two books before mentioned—"His Own Country," by Paul Kester (*Bobbs-Merrill*), and "The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man" (*Sherman-French*), the first a novel and the second a record of fact. Mr. Kester's narrative runs to nearly 700 pages, but in structure it is quite simple. A young quadroon, the natural son of a Virginia planter, goes to Canada in his youth, acquires an education, accumulates money, and marries a white wife. Then, through an agent, he buys the decayed plantation of his old master, and returns as a gentleman of leisure. The circumambient gentry are horrified—what, a coon at Comorn Hall! But the worst is yet to come. The prodigal demands social recognition, goes into the courts to obtain his rights, defies the local *noblesse*, attracts the attention of the Northern newspapers, takes to the Chautauquas, horns into national politics, lunches at the White House, founds a black party, collects a war fund of millions, and tries to organize into one compact whole the financial, voting and even military strength of his 10,000,000 fellows. Alas, too soon! A cog slips, and down he goes, just as success seems yielding to his prehension. His Black Crusaders blow up, the newspapers turn upon him, his following falls away, he himself is amiably butchered by his white neighbors, and his son and daughter with him. . . . "'My son,' he gasped. 'My daughter—I have given all.' . . . Above Comorn rolled the leaped the sombre smoke and crimson flame. Against even the brightening glory of the morning sky the Black Crusader had unfurled and flung the awful challenge of his sable flag." . . .

A mere shocker? A book to harrow fat women? Nay, you mistake it. It is a serious attempt, by a man of Northern birth, long resident in the South, to project an experimental beam into the sinister and much muddled future. It is careful, thoughtful, persuasive, provocative; it stands as far above the gaudy balderdash of a Thomas Dixon as a novel by Dreiser stands above the boudoir goods of Robert W. Chambers. There is in it no sentimental propaganda, no childish tickling of the blackamoor. One sees in Brent, the Black Crusader, not only the unsuspected potentialities of the emerging negro, but also his deficiencies—his lack of self-restraint, his savage passion, his almost Jewish impudence and obnoxiousness. And in the lesser blacks of the chronicle these deficiencies are made even plainer; examine them carefully, if you are not a Southerner, and you will get some notion of what it means to live among such evil and intolerable Anthropoidea. Nor are the whites overdone in stupidity and hunkerousness. They are not the barbaric white trash of Georgia, but Virginians of gentle birth and rearing—the only genuine gentleman, perhaps, now extant in this moral republic. And they approach their problem, despite its final descent to bloodshed, in decency and soberness of mind, and with as much charity as human beings in trouble ever show. In brief, the story is artfully planned; there is no special pleading in it; it is an honest and discreet attempt to put living drama into a work of the imagination, and it comes, in places, to a very high level of achievement.

"The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man" is less sophisticated and reflective; all the author seeks to do is to tell his own story, with certain generalizations by the way. He is, like most Afro-Americans of any intelligence, chiefly white and of good blood; more, he is so nearly pure white that, in the end, he marries a white wife and passes over from the one race into the other. The value of his tale lies in the accuracy of its details—its pictures of the social life of the negro, North and South. He distinguishes three classes, (*a*) the tough niggeroes, (*b*) the order of niggero servants, de-

pendent on the whites, and (*c*) the new order of well-to-do, industrious, self-respecting and aspiring niggeroes. It is the misfortune of the South that the first class is still numerous, and that the second is shrinking. It is the double misfortune of the South that the white Southerners still exhibit a vain and passionate intolerance of the third class. The brunette Napoleon (or Rockefeller, or Roosevelt, or Carranza, or Garrison), when he comes, will come out of Class III. . . . The anonymous author handles the question of miscegenation somewhat gingerly, though it is, in a sense, the main matter of his book. Interbreeding is going out of fashion in the South; it is no longer customary down there for every gentleman to have his xanthous mistress. But that is not because the Southerners have re-enacted the seventh commandment, but because the more sightly yellow girls have improved in education and aspiration and self-respect, and are thus less willing to enter into concubinage. A compensatory movement, not to be mentioned in a family magazine, shows itself in the North. You will find some notice of it in the present work. . . .

II

"The Mysterious Stranger" having escaped the public hangman, Albert Bigelow Paine now ventures upon the open publication of Mark Twain's "What Is Man?" (*Harper*). Of this book I have often discoursed at length; Mark wrote it back in the '80's, but did not print it until 1906, and then only in an edition limited to 250 copies, and not for sale. It contains, in brief, two ideas, neither of them very startling, the first being that man, in Dr. Crile's phase, is an adaptive mechanism, and the second being that altruism, when analyzed, always turns out to be self-interest in a long-tailed coat. These ideas, as I say, are not startling —most men of any intelligence subscribe to them today—but when they first occurred to Mark they were less prevalent, and so they shook him up a bit, and he set them down with the air of a boy pulling the cat's tail, and was afraid to circulate them. Even now they meet with horrified opposition from such pillars of forgotten nonsense as the New York *Times Review of Books*. In the issue for June 3 there is a long editorial denouncing them as naughty, and stating that "one refuses to believe that the book voices the settled, mature convictions held by Mr. Clemens—at least one does not wish to believe it." Refuses? On what ground? No more than a glance at Paine's life of Mark is sufficient to prove that he not only held to them to the last, but that he was fond of extending them and reinforcing them. If he was anything at all in this world, he was an absolute skeptic and determinist; nothing offended and enraged him more than the sloppy idealism and optimism which the *Times* now seeks to ram down his æsophagus. That such bosh should be seriously printed as criticism is surely a sorry indication of the depths to which criticism is sunk in These States.

But let us not be impatient. The fact that Mark was an intelligent man is one that will penetrate the caputs of the national grandmas of letters only slowly. They began by greeting him as a childish buffoon; they proceeded to hail him a purveyor of refined entertainment; they are now in the stage of praising him as a chaser of the blues—in the *Times* phrase, one "who has done so much, through his joyous humor, to lighten the burdens of his generation." Such judgments are worse than errors; they are indecencies. It is as if Italian organ-grinders should essay to estimate Beethoven. The truth about Mark is that he was a colossus, that he stood head and shoulders above his country and his time, that even the combined pull of Puritanism without and Philistinism within could not bring him down to the national level. The result is that he remains mysterious—a baffling puzzle to the critics of the country. Read Howells' "My Mark Twain" if

you would see how even the utmost personal intimacy can leave a second-rate man with only a vague and inaccurate picture of a first-rate man.

III

"THOSE TIMES AND THESE," by Irvin S. Cobb (*Doran*), is a collection of sketches and short stories which may be likened by the judicious to a sandwich made of very stale and leathery *Kriegsbrot*, but with an excellent slice of Smithfield ham in the middle. That slice of sweet hip bears title of "Hark! From the Tombs," and is a chapter from the history of Jeff Poindexter, body servant to Judge William Pitman Priest. It is an extravagant piece of buffoonery, and its central situation is as old as farce, but its presentation of niggero character and ways of thought is penetrating and irresistible. No feeble minstrel show is here; the authentic swart baboon is offered up; as for me I have fairly bawled over it. The tales of white folks interest me less, partly because they are full of a mawkish sentimentality and partly because their people are unreal. Consider, for example, Sergeant Jimmy Bagby, the *raconteur*, in "Ex-Fightin' Billy." He recalls to me, not any human being I have actually known, but the creaking fun-machines of the late O. Henry.

IV

LONG ago, in the early days of my pastorate, I used to woo the publishers with pleas for more plays in book form; of late they well-nigh swamp me. Let me call the roll of the arrivals since our last rubbing of noses: Vols. XIX and XX of the Drama League Series (*Doubleday-Page*), the first devoted to a translation of "Malvaloga," by the Spaniards, Serafín and Joaquín Alvarez Quintero, and the second given over to four pieces of the Washington Square Players; "Plays of Gods and Men," by Lord Dunsany (*Luce*), including "The Tents of the Arabs," "The Laughter of the Gods," "The Queen's Enemies" and "A Night at an Inn"; a separate printing of "A Night at an Inn" in a new Neighborhoodhood Playhouse Series (*Sunwise Turn*); "The Son of Man," by B. Russell Herts (*Shay*); "Human Wisps," by Anna Wolfrom (*Sherman-French*); "Three Welch Plays," by Jeannette Marks (*Little-Brown*), the same being "The Merry, Merry Cuckoo," "The Deacon's Hat" and "Welsh Honeymoon"; "The Bravest Thing in the World," by Lee Pape (*Penn*); "Faust," by E. L. Viets (*Jackson*); "The Last Straw," by Bosworth Crocker (*Shay*), being the first instalment of Plays of the Washington Square Players; "Comedies of Words," by Arthur Schnitzler, translated by Pierre Loving (*Stewart-Kidd*), and including "The Hour of Recognition," "The Big Scene," "The Festival of Bacchus," "Literature" and "His Helpmate"; "Portmanteau Plays," by Stuart Walker (*Stewart-Kidd*), including "The Trimplet," "Nevertheless," "The Medicine Show," and "The Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil"; "Five Plays," by George Fitzmaurice (*Little-Brown*), including "The Country Dressmaker," "The Moonlighter," "The Pie-Dish," "The Magic Glasses" and "The Dandy Dolls"; "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots," "The Witching Hour," "Oliver Goldsmith" and "In Mizzouri," by Augustus Thomas (*French*), and "Maggie Pepper" and "The Third Degree," by the late Charles Klein (*French*). A formidable list, God wot. Seventeen different volumes; forty-two different plays.

Moreover, nearly all of them worth reading—nearly every one with its touch of interest. The four Dunsany pieces and the five by Schnitzler belong to the best literature of our time, and those by Miss Marks, Mr. Fitzmaurice and the Quintero brothers, if they fall below that high mark, are at least sincere, intelligent and deserving of respect. Even the Broadway confections of Augustus Thomas and the boob-shockers of Charles Klein are not to be sniffed at; if their publication is not a